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100% RETRO

HOT ROD

D • E • L • U • X • E

MENU ♦ JANUARY 2016

★ 06 FLAG MAN

The rise of the hot rod caretaker.

08 WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Brock shoots D'Olivo shooting Daytona.

10 RODDIN' @ RANDOM

Dode's open house, gassers at the ADM, John Jodauga prints for sale, plus coverage of all the hot action at the Meltdown and Dirt Drags.

26 KELLY'S HEROES

Cover story: Many have worked to keep Bill Kelly's historic coupe alive over the years.

34 THE MAILMAN SPECIAL

Being invited to appear on the Ed Sullivan show—by Beach Boy Brian Wilson no less—was just one highlight in this Chevy roadster's long lifespan.

42 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

We think it's better to give *and* receive!

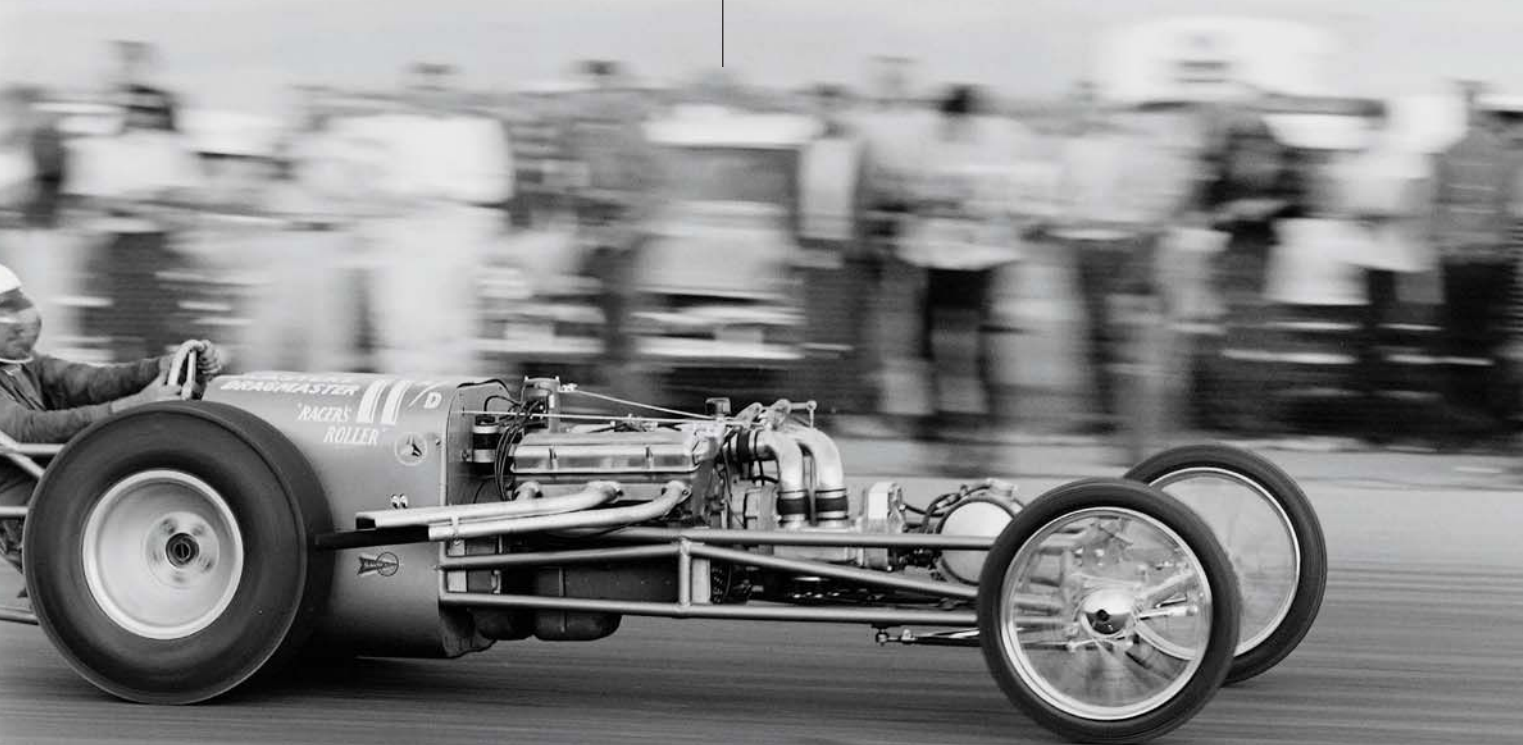
48 POWER STRUGGLES

Part 2: Auto racing explodes in 1956—for better and for worse.

58 THE TREASURED TROVE

No reproductions here; this collection of racing and rodding memorabilia is 100 percent authentic.

> Robert Genat's story on Dode Martin's open house (see Roddin' @ Random, page 10) inspired us to hunt the archives for some vintage race action from the master Dragmaster. Eric Rickman caught the Martin & Nelson slingshot on its way to winning Top Eliminator at the eighth annual Gold Cup Drags in Santa Ana, where the car also posted top speed of the meet at 159.30 mph. Coverage of the meet appeared in HRM's July 1959 issue.



• PICS: ERIC RICKMAN

MENU ♦ JANUARY 2016

64 PARTS WITH APPEAL

Old-fashioned forced induction, the solution to pesky broken manifold bolts, and a DIY rivet kit.

68 TIME WARP

Part 2 of our altered project's FE motor buildup sees it finished and on the dyno.

74 PERIOD PERFECT

How to outfit the right rearend for your vintage gasser project.

78 SCRAPBOOK

That handbuilt four-banger dragster lives, more info on Dick Flynn, looking for the whereabouts of The Quiet One, and more.

82 TROPHY GIRL

Kenz & Leslie win a trophy, but not with a streamliner this time.

> While looking through Rickman's Gold Cup images, we came across this outtake of Jack Schnepf in the pits looking over the massive blown Lincoln motor in his A/Roadster entry. He not only won the class that day but also set two strip records: a top speed of 138.46 mph and an 11-second-flat e.t.



ON THE COVER

When 15-year-old Bill Kelly set out to hot rod a beat-up Deuce coupe back in 1948, could he have imagined that the car would be preserved and passed down, like a treasured heirloom, for nearly 70 years? The '32 is in the hands of Bob Kasner now, and he invited us to his Kasner's Korner Garage to share the story of the much-traveled street/strip coupe. Wes Allison photographed the car for the cover and its feature, which begins on page 26. Model Erin Skye brought her appeal all the way from Austin, Texas, for our cover and Parts with Appeal section, which begins on page 64.



News Flash....

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Give and Take ★

It seems lately I've been hearing the term "caretaker" more and more in the car hobby. Trends in car collecting shift just like trends anywhere else in our culture, and these days, originality is king. Used to be if you found an old car in good condition, it was a prime candidate for restoration. Nowadays, not so fast. If that car is a prime example of how things were done in its era—from well-preserved factory-originals to a hot rod or race car still wearing the speed equipment from decades ago—today's conventional wisdom will recommend you leave it alone.

Bob Kasner considers himself the caretaker of our cover car, a '32 coupe Bill Kelly originally hopped up as a Philadelphia teenager in 1948. "I don't want to change a thing on it," Bill says of the historic, Cad-powered coupe.

Likewise Rob Johnson, owner of the Woody Lee T modified we had on our cover in May, took the advice of buddies Pete Chapouris and Pete Eastwood to leave the former show and

race car in its Rip Van Winkle-like state. "It wouldn't take much to get it running again," Rob told us, "but it's so original, such a piece of history, it really deserves to be in a museum."

This phenomenon reaches into just about every niche in the car hobby these days. Collectors are clamoring for original muscle cars, classics, postwar sports cars, you name it. It's a mindset that's related to the barn find craze that continues to gain momentum, despite many of us wondering how there could still be so many hidden gems out there.

I think it takes a special kind of enthusiast, especially among the hot rodding community, to be a car's caretaker. After all, hot rodding is about making cars go faster and look better, right? That's why so few cars are ever really "finished." There's always something that can be done—tuned, tweaked, refinished, what have you—to improve performance or visual appeal.

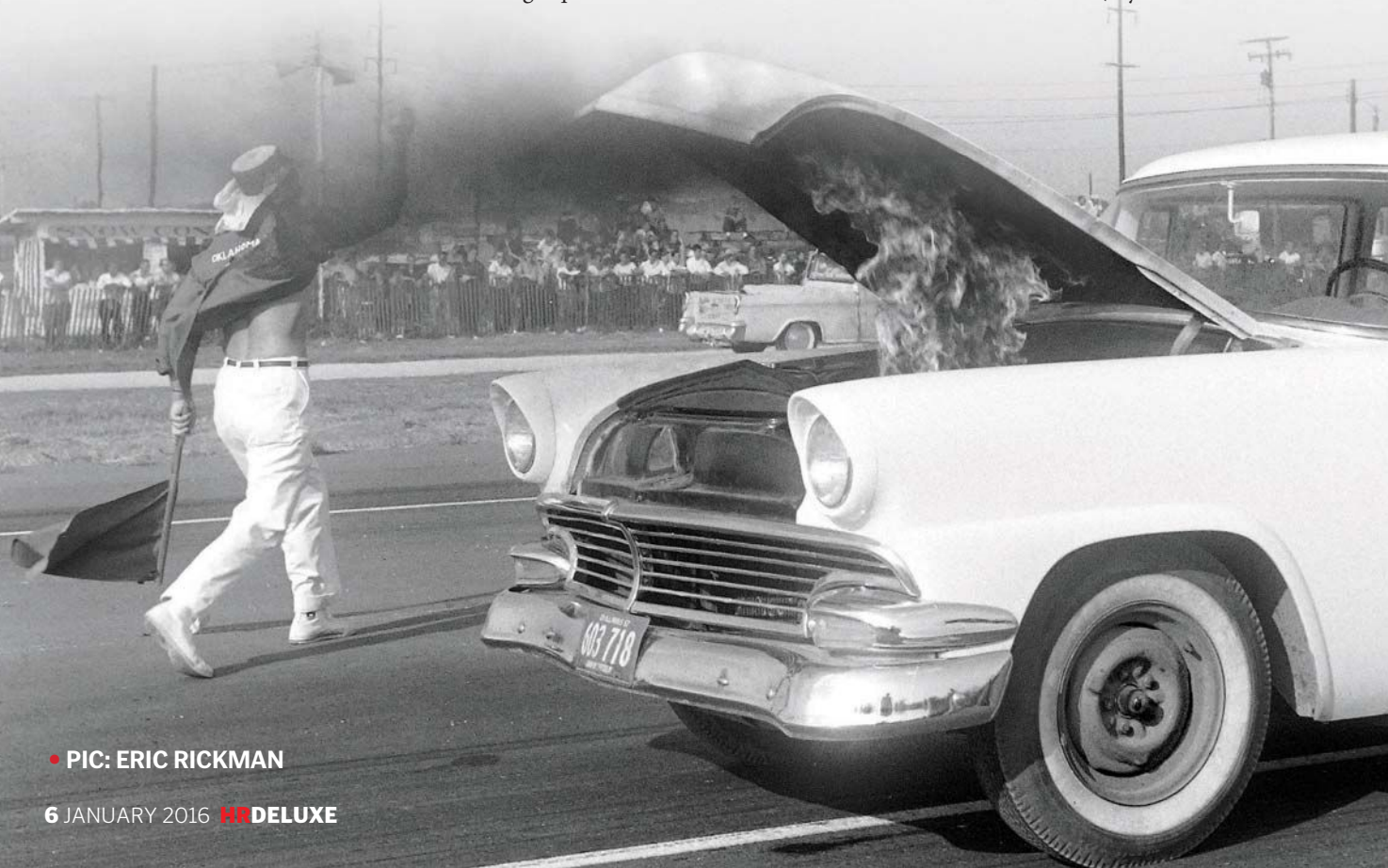
Caretaking runs counter to that. Caretaking requires a lot

of restraint on the part of the owner. To truly act as caretaker, you are called on to preserve the vehicle in its historic state. Repairs are allowed, provided you hew to the era and use nothing but authentic parts and processes. And if you want to drive the car—sparingly, of course—you'll need to return it to running condition and likely replace those cracked and brittle tires. But there again, care must be taken to maintain the car's authenticity as much as possible.

Most of the hot rod caretakers I know—not professional museum staff but individual hobbyists—are able to exercise that restraint for two reasons: One, they have a deep understanding of and respect for the significance of preserving history for others to appreciate. And two, usually they own other, non-historic hobby cars that they can play with. Bob Kasner, for example, parks the Kelly coupe within an enviable collection of two- and four-wheel performance machines that he can tinker with to his heart's content.

I find the caretaker phenomenon interesting for another reason: None of the caretakers I know are original owners of the cars. Nor do original builders of historic hot rods or race cars consider themselves caretakers, at least in my experience. Glen Krapff, owner of the "flip-front" '40 Ford in our September issue, bought the one-owner Standard coupe in the early 1960s and has been modifying it ever since. For the most part it looks much like it did when it appeared in HOT ROD in 1972, but it is a continuing work-in-progress. Never did I hear Glen refer to himself as a "caretaker" of the '40. But he was proud of the fact that the car remains a project that he and his sons can enjoy together.

No, there's something about being an original owner or original builder that is different than the caretaker job. If it was always yours, you have carte blanche to do what you like with the car. Some will preserve, but others will continue to modify, as Joe Sbrigato did with his Chevy roadster (as you'll see in "The



• PIC: ERIC RICKMAN

Mailman Special" on page 34). If there is care to be taken with an historic hot rod, it's up to the second, and subsequent owners.

Are you the caretaker of something special, an historic rod or race car that has been preserved—or at least had its decay arrested—years after its glory days? Maybe it's your dad's race car, or your grandpa's hot rod. If so, we'd love to hear about it, and also how you see your role in the car's life story.

—DREW HARDIN

★ **EMAIL ME:**
DREWHARDIN57@GMAIL.COM

> Things were hot at the 1957 NHRA Nationals in Oklahoma City, particularly for the owner of this C/Gas Ford. We don't know who the unlucky racer was, but we can tell you that starter Herman Troutman, who looks like he's trying to get the fire crew's attention, was rewarded for his "sincerity and devotion to duty throughout four days of the '57 Nationals" with the HOT ROD magazine Sportsman Award.

HOT ROD DELUXE

JANUARY 2016

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ADVERTISING INFORMATION

Please call **Hot Rod Advertising** Department at 310/531-9183. Related publications include *Car Craft*, *Circle Track*, *Classic Trucks*, *Engine Masters*, *Hot Rod*, *Mopar Muscle*, *Muscle Car Review*, and *Street Rodder*.

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★ WHERE IT ALL BEGAN ★

• PIC: RAY BROCK





Putting Bob in His Place

We dive into the Petersen Publishing Co. film archive seeking answers to old questions. We come away with more new questions than answers, every time. We blame career Petersen photographer Bob D'Olivo for storing the black-and-white film exposed by company staffers since March 1955. Bob is pictured in the last place we expected to find him: On the right edge of an image that did not include him when published (May '56 HRM). We had to wonder why. Bob's colleague obviously composed his shot around the guy flying their magazine's flag. Were Bob's trademark white pants deemed too tight for school librarians' eyes? Why did the art director hack him off at the elbow? (See what we mean about new questions?)

D'Olivo was equally surprised to see all that Ray Brock saw through his viewfinder 60 years ago, as Tim Flock approached them at 140 mph. "This is the Daytona Beach original beach-and-road course," Bob explained. "They ran south on pavement, then turned left to go down to the beach, heading north, and back onto pavement. Hell, 140 is nothing today!" NASCAR's defending Grand National champ went on to win the combination-modified-sportsman event in this Olds-powered '39 Chevy, then the main event in a Chrysler. (Find much more about 1956's wild Speed Weeks in this issue's second installment of the Power Struggles series.)

—DAVE WALLACE





• PICS: ROBERT GENAT

★ CACKLE

Dode's Open House

It all started a couple decades ago when Dode Martin first opened his house and shop in Fallbrook, California, for a few old drag racing friends for a summer barbecue. Over the years the gathering has grown and grown, and this year there were more cars than ever and the usual drag racing legends. Martin always has a display of his old racing memorabilia, including photos, magazines, and vintage racing jackets from Lions, Pomona, and Cado Mills, Texas.

Over the years, Martin has remained in contact with many of his drag racing contemporaries. His annual picnic is an opportunity for them to gather to bench race and swap lies. Attending this year's event were Don Prudhomme, Mike Kuhl, Tommy "The Watchdog" Allen, Steve Gibbs, Roland Leong, and a few others. And what would a gathering of old drag racers be without a cacklefest? Three vintage front-engine dragsters lit off, providing the sounds and smells of the glory days of drag racing. —ROBERT GENAT

★ PROJECT



PROJECT: Inside Dode's Hobby Shop there's always an interesting project or two, such as this extended Dragmaster chassis with a flathead engine.



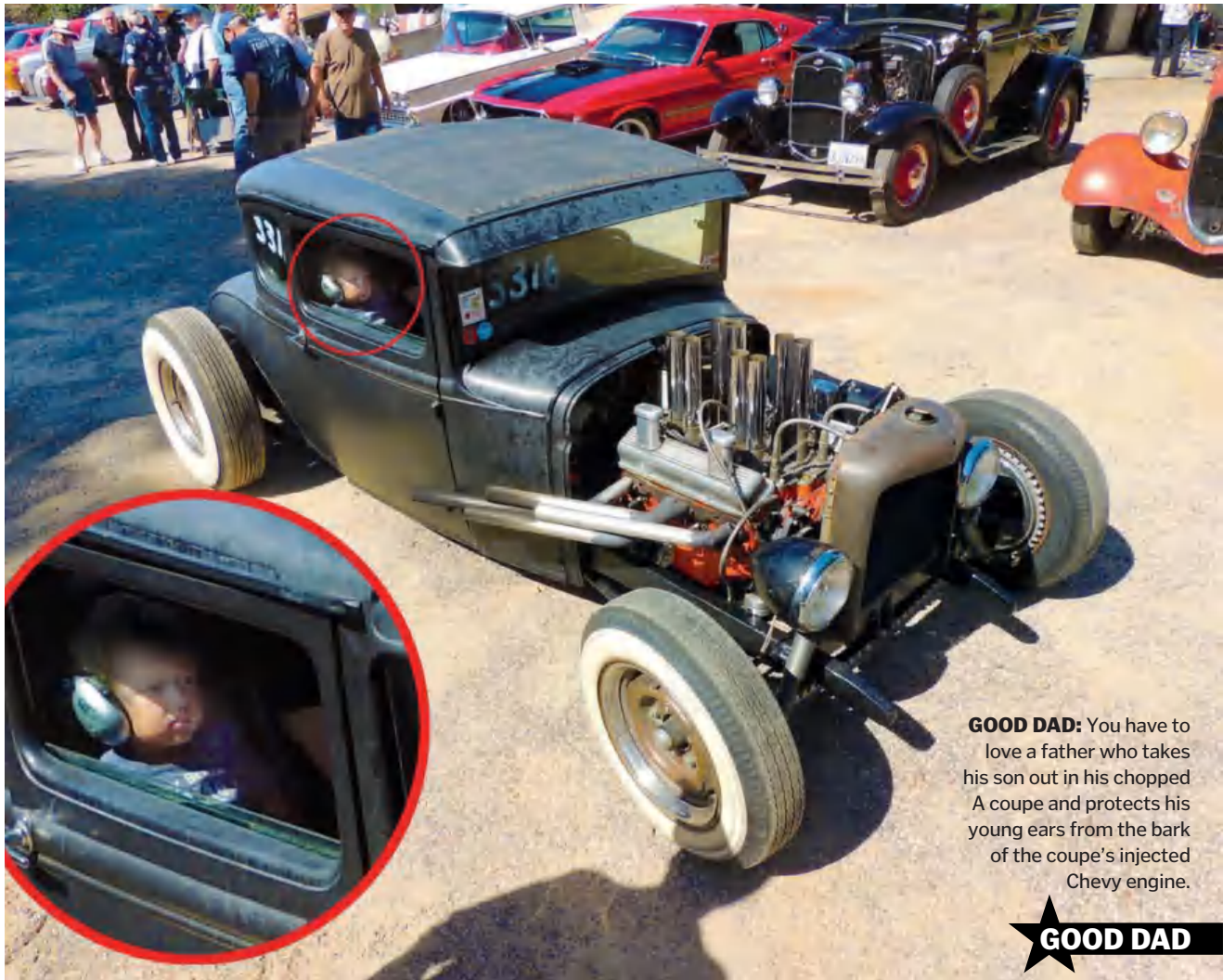
★
DODE

DODE: Dode Martin is one of the most soft-spoken and easygoing people you'd ever want to meet. While never a dry lakes racer, he was one of the first to build dragsters and continues to do so today.



★
ROLAND

ROLAND: Dode Martin holds court with longtime friend Roland Leong (in the red shirt) as dozens of attendees listen in.



GOOD DAD: You have to love a father who takes his son out in his chopped A coupe and protects his young ears from the bark of the coupe's injected Chevy engine.

★
GOOD DAD

• PICS: DREW HARDIN



GASSERS GALORE ★

GASSERS GALORE: The parking lot at the Automobile Driving Museum simply couldn't contain all the cars that turned out for this year's gasser tribute. The overflow spilled out onto the street and adjacent parking lots.



BEST OF SHOW ★

BEST OF SHOW: Ted Radoumis won Best of Show at the ADM for his Energizer Willys pickup. He built the car in 1966 and drag raced it until the mid-1970s, when he sold it to his crew chief. Some 20 years later Ted bought the car back, and it's been restored to its 1971 racing livery.

Gassers at the ADM

On a hot August afternoon nearly 70 gassers, hot rods, muscle cars, and more filled the parking lot at the Automobile Driving Museum in El Segundo, California, to over-capacity for the museum's Tribute to Gassers II: Legends event. Royal Pro-Motion's Robert Rey spent months helping the museum line up a wide variety of gassers, some historic, others built in tribute to the hugely popular drag racing class. Among the familiar faces we saw at the show was Glen Krapff, whose "Flip-Front" '40 Ford, our Sept. '15 cover car, was on display inside the museum.

Mid-afternoon we got a break from the heat when the museum hosted a panel discussion in the ballroom featuring Ed Iskenderian, Bones Balogh, Jim Kirby, and Scott Dapron. All had great yarns to spin about racing's heyday. Isky talked about the gasser and cam grinder wars and kept looking to his "dyno man," Balogh, for confirmation. Dapron, who went to work for Mickey Thompson in 1967, shared some funny/scary memories he had—"surfing" the salt flats being towed on a derelict fender—during downtime while Thompson was setting records in the Mustangs. And gasser/Funny Car builder Kirby summed it up well when he said, "We were all friends until we got to the starting line."

—DREW HARDIN

FOUND FORD: When Scott Dapron bought this derelict 1955 Ford, a lot of its period speed equipment came with it. The engine was sitting in the field next to the car, while a pair of Racemaster slicks, headers, and the radiator were stashed in the trunk. Scott got the car running in just 10 days, using a 427 he had in his garage that he fitted with Lucas fuel injection.



FOUND FORD ★

Limited-Edition Art Prints

Longtime motorsports illustrator John Jodauga is offering a series of 11x14-inch limited-edition art prints that showcase more than

20 of his most familiar paintings from his near 50-year-long career. The colorful, high gloss prints include all nine of the press kit covers that he produced for Bill

"Grumpy" Jenkins during the 1970s; additional Pro Stock subjects such as Dyno Don Nicholson, Bob Glidden, Gapp & Roush, Wally Booth, Maskin & Kanners, and Paul Blevins; Funny Car campaigners Raymond Beadle and Barry Setzer; and illustrations commemorating such barrier-breaking moments as Kenny Bernstein's first 300-mph run in Top Fuel and Kurt Johnson's first 6-second run in Pro Stock. To see the complete print offering and find out how to order, visit Jodauga's website at jodaugaillustrations.com.



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• PICS: SCOTTY LACHENAUER



OLD-SCHOOL COOL: Nick Nicholas has a knack for bringing old-time hot rod competition back for today's rodders to enjoy. First it was the Hot Rod Hill Climb, and now the Hot Rod Dirt Drags, set on an old dirt airstrip in southern Colorado. Plans are already in motion to make next year's drags even bigger.

★ OLD-SCHOOL COOL

Mike "Nick" Nicholas has a knack for taking things that are old and forgotten and breathing new life into them. Whether it's building a traditional hot rod from dusty and rusty old parts, or recreating a vintage hot rodding event, Nick's got a keen eye

for the nostalgic and a knack for the old-school way.

Over the past few years, Nick's keyed in on recreating old time rodding events in the Rocky Mountain region, basing his operation in and around his hometown of Denver. He

operates Nick's Hot Rod Garage in the suburb of Englewood, a rodder's oasis where he puts together some of the finest traditional machines west of the Mississippi.

Nick's pathway to putting on traditional hot rod shows

started with the Hot Rod Hill Climb, rousing celebrations of the 60th anniversaries of the legendary Georgetown, Colorado, Hot Rod Hill Climbs of 1953 and '54. HOT ROD magazine covered the original trials, and Mike used those vintage



BLOWN FLATTIE



BLOWN FLATTIE: Eddie Piz and son Dan stand next to Ed's beautiful '34 five-window Ford coupe. The hot rod boasts a McCulloch-supercharged flathead, which adds a good dose of power to the lightweight coupe. Ed races in the Flat Head series in Denver, and gave up the Nationals that weekend to be at the HRDD. He's also a veteran of HRM, as his club was featured in the November 1951 issue.



SHOEING IT

SHOEING IT: Tyler Hardie and his dad Nick hit the track in Tyler's period-correct patina skinned '30 roadster. The owner built the car for the Dirt Drags with just days to spare. Next stop for Tyler is the Hot Rod Hill Climb in August, and then the Race of Gentlemen in October.

articles as inspiration to recreate the events more than half a century later.

Following his success in Georgetown, Nick is revisiting history again with the return of classic dirt drag racing. Back in the day, Rocky Mountain

racing pioneers Cal Kennedy, Ed Piz, Vern Holmes (of the Denver Timing Association), and Duayne Nusbaum (of the Boulder Timing Association) talked their way onto retired dirt air strips to do battle with their home-built machines. The



★ FLAG GIRL

FLAG GIRL: What's a traditional hot rod showdown without a beautiful flag girl? Nick's sweetheart Amy Bourcy gestures the next contenders to the line. Daryl Roberts in his Red Ram powered '33 Dodge Hi-boy is only happy to oblige.

THE MAN: Organizer Mike "Nick" Nicholas gives some last-minute instruction to the drivers awaiting their turn. The turnout was beyond expectations for the first year of HHRD, as more than 75 cars signed up for the event. Next year, Mike expects to quickly fill out the lineup.

★ THE MAN



Pikes Peak Timing Association also had a dirt strip east of Colorado Springs that was run by the Cam Winders in the early 1950s. It's a track that received some national notoriety, including a story in the February 1953 issue of HRM.

To return to the grassroots of Rocky Mountain drag racing, Nick needed an old dirt airstrip to run the event. On Google Earth he found one, just behind the Best Western Movie Manor in Monte Vista, Colorado. As you'd guess from its name, Movie Manor has two drive-in theaters on site, surrounded by a modern 60-room hotel, and there was a perfect spot on the grounds for a car show. Without hesitation, Rio Grande County bent over backwards to plow, grade, and finesse the valley floor to perfection.

Participants gathered at Johnny Martin's Auto Trim and Hot Rod Shop in Alamosa, a rodding hot spot about 20 miles east of Monte Vista, for tech inspection on Friday afternoon. Nick had about 50 cars registered to run as of Friday, but as the sound of hopped-up engines revved around Monte Vista, other local hot rodders joined the fray, eager to show their stuff. Another 25-plus cars signed up on Saturday, bringing

a touch of indigenous hot rod flavor the brawl.

A car show also sprung up on the Green, the expansive lawn next to the track, as bands played, dj's spun records, and race ready rods got ready to hit the track. Several prominent cars showed up for the races, including Cal Kennedy and the recreation of his T-33 drag car, a highly modified '33 Chevy roadster that he flogged at the original hill climbs and on dragstrips across the region. Dave Scroggs was also there in his Rolling Bones three-window, and Mark McCann represented the Deluxe Speed Shop in his Riley powered '29 banger roadster.

Racing on the $\frac{1}{8}$ mile dirt track was fast paced and all out. Rivalries developed among the participants, which only added to the multiple flavors in this punchbowl of power.

Nighttime didn't slow the festivities at all. Downtown Monte Vista had a car show featuring the drivers and their rides, blending in with the local hot rod scene. Along with the featured movies at the Movie Manor, there was an impromptu drag session out on the dirt track in the pitch black, aided only by the headlights of the participants.



GOING THE DISTANCE

GOING THE DISTANCE: A group from Florida turned out to be the long distance haulers of the event. Ron Hickman traveled out in his roadster and blazed some quick times out on the dirt. His buddies Greg Southworth, David Ruhs, and Dale Grau (pictured here) came out for the festivities; just a stop on their way to the roadster show in Los Angeles!

**SCENE
AT THE HOT ROD
DIRT DRAGS
(CONT'D)**



SHORT FUSE FED: The Deton8tors Car Club (Tom Hardy, RJ Barnes, Clint Glasgow, Ed Gallagher) out of Denver brought this vintage Hemi-powered FED to the event. It's an original chassis, raced on the East Coast. In just three weeks they put it together for the HRDD, and it did not disappoint.

SHORT FUSE FED





FORD OLDS



FORD OLDS: Ken Ranum decided to drive his Olds-powered '40 Ford to the HRDD. He traveled to Monte Vista from his home in Lakewood, Colorado, 212 miles away, which took him five hours of two-lane-highway time, but it was well worth it. He bought the car at age 15 and has owned it for more than 50 years. It's still powered by a strong '57 371ci motor. His grandfather helped him weld the headers that are still on the car.

Drivers hit the track again on Sunday. Onlookers cheered as the hot rods ramped it up, schooled and tutored in the ways of the dirt track after a day of experience driving on the dusty Colorado soil/clay. When all was said and done, the event was a complete head splittin' success. Nick has vowed to make this event bigger next year. It's something that a true hot rodder would not want to miss. Stay in the loop at www.hotroddirttrags.com, and keep up with the garage at www.nickshotrodgarage.com. Make plans to be there next year. You won't want to miss it!

—SCOTTY LACHENAUER



SPECIAL

SPECIAL: No hot rodding event in Colorado would be complete without a showing from Cal Kennedy and his T-33 Chevy roadster. The car is a recreation of his drag racing hot rod, which tore up Georgetown's Leavenworth Mountain hill climb course back in 1953 and '54. It was also a veteran of the local drags back in the '50s. Its Wayne 12-port motor is the same one that powered the original Chevy special.

ROLLING BONES: Dave Scroggs and his '32 are always a big draw and a top performer wherever they show up. His Rolling Bones-built three-window is motor-vated by a 292 inch, 0.60-over small-block Chevy with tri-power and is shifted by a T-5 transmission. A Halibrand quick-change gets the power to the back wheels.

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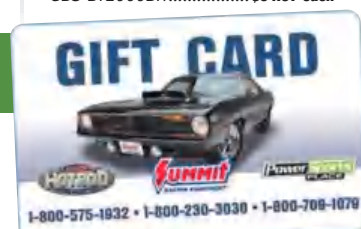
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• PICS: BOB MCCLURG



★ FIRST TIMERS

FIRST TIMERS: First cars down the track were the mild custom, light blue metallic '40 Ford Standard belonging to Mark Russell and Gary Moderhock's black primer 1966 Chevy pickup.

The Meltdown Drags is one of the most nostalgic drag racing events in the nation and about the closest thing to an old time outlaw gasser meet that you'll find anywhere in the Midwest. Imagine Willys, Austins, Anglias, Tri-Five Chevys, Henry Js, early Novas, vintage Fords, Studebakers, classic Corvettes, and virtually every type of hot rod iron originally found competing in the gas coupe and sedan classes back in the day. Now picture not just one or two of them, but dozens.

The race was founded by an all-volunteer consortium of 50-plus Midwestern vintage drag racing enthusiasts and organized by a committee of seven including Meltdown Drags Association President Eric Koopmeiners and VP Paul Zielsdorf, along with Jeff

Koopmeiners, Steve Liberto, Smokey Moe Petersen, and Tom Bucek. The double-entendre name was a natural, given the home track, Byron Dragway, is located within spitting distance of the Byron, Illinois, Nuclear Generating Station.

"More than 10 years ago the seeds were sewn after a discussion on how cool it would be to hold an old time gasser meet," says Paul Zielsdorf. "Then six years ago we turned those thoughts, ideas, and dreams into reality. Word got around, and more and more people started coming, and now we have this!"

"This" consisted of 574 period-correct pre-entries from 1966 on down and 100 back-ups. Included in that lineup were cars from the Southeast Gassers, Great Lakes Gassers,

Nostalgic Gasser Racing Association, the Border Bandits, Tin Butchers, Twisted Pistons, "No Club Guys," and others.

Gasser devotees attended from 41 states, Canada, Great Britain, Portugal, Scotland, Sweden, and Australia for three days of nonstop drag racing action '50s and '60s style. There are no classes, no e.t. brackets, no final round eliminators, no trophies, and no stress! Entries pass a stringent technical inspection and then can run as many times as they like, against whomever they like.

Highlights from Meltdown Drags 2015 included "Cam Father" Ed Iskenderian and gasser greats "Ohio George"

SCENE AT THE MELTDOWN DRAGS

JUNKYARD DOGS: That's Randy "Wrench Bender" Jackson's 1941 Willys B/GS pickup with GMC 4-71-supercharged small-block Chevrolet power racing Ben Bacon's injected SBC Anglia.

SWINDLER: Race cars of historic significance included the original Stone, Woods & Cook Swindler II 1941 Willys currently owned by collector Mike Wales.



★ SWINDLER



★ JUNKYARD DOGS



SURVIVOR

SURVIVOR: Cancer survivor Cheryl Kaiser, in her 1929 Model A pickup in the far lane, puts a sizeable holeshot on the '34 Ford coupe of Mark Stimeman. Cheryl has participated in all six Meltdown Drags events and made a total of 19 passes at Meltdown 2015. She is truly an amazing woman!



CHEVY VS. HEMI

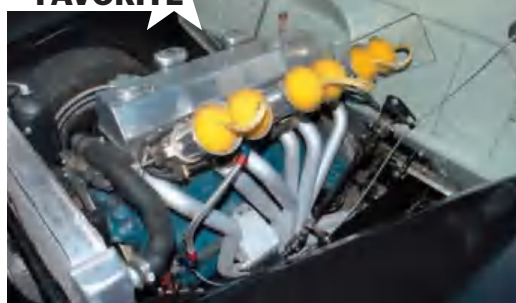
CHEVY VS. HEMI: By far the most popular matchup of the weekend was between Chicago police officer Mike Billina and his wheelstanding 1956 Chevy against the ex-Candies & Hughes, Jake's Speed Shop-sponsored 1965 AWB Hemi Plymouth match racer driven by current caretaker, James Paulsen.

FAVORITE: One of the crowd favorites was the 1950 Chevy pickup owned and driven by Ron Plender out of South Dakota. Powered by a Kirby-Sissell-equipped, port-injected 292 Chevy I-6 and backed up by a Jerico four-speed, the truck ran a best of 11.41 at 114.30.

TIE BREAKER: Meltdown Drags participants Vincent Eisenreoch (left) and George Adams, both from St. Louis, tied to win the GMC 6-71 blower at the Meltdown Drags prize table. So they arm wrestled each other for it, with Eisenreoch winning as Meltdown Drags officials Paul Zielsdorf, Smokey Moe Petersen, and Tom Bucek looked on.



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BAD NEWS

BAD NEWS: "Bad News Travels Fast" is a 1964 Dodge Polara (with '65 Dodge front sheetmetal) owned by Jim Henry and driven by Steve Moths. The big-inch Hemi made a number of exhibition runs over the weekend and did some killer burnouts!



100 PERCENT MOPAR

Montgomery and Robert "Bones" Balogh serving as Grand Marshals. Parked out in front of the celebrity tent was Taylor Jenkins' replica of the Bones, Dubach & Pisano AA/GS '33 Willys coupe, and Ohio George's multi-record-holding 1969 BB/AT Mustang currently owned by Ford muscle car collector-historian Bob Perkins. Also on hand were drag racing greats, including

ex-Ramchargers Top Fuel driver Merck Cherkow, who ran his Buick nailhead-engine K88 dragster; Arnie "The Farmer" Beswick, who made runs in his "Star of the Circuit" 1966 Pontiac GTO funny car; "Nitro Neal" Basiglia; and the AA/Gas Supercharged team Kroona & Sanburg.

Meltdown's three-day "drag-a-ganza" also included a car show, swap meet, and cruise night.



SHADES OF BIG DADDY: Believe it or not, this is how "Big Daddy" Don Garlits started out. Bob Huberty and his Ford flathead-powered, Model-T-chassis dragster go up against Kevin Crouse's Chevy-powered "Ornery Buzzard" just like Garlits did back in 1957.

SHADES OF BIG DADDY



HOT SHOE

SCENE AT THE MELTDOWN DRAGS (CONT'D)

100 PERCENT MOPAR: Bored with Ford? One of the wildest hot rods at Meltdown 2015 was Brian Coleman's 100-percent-pure-Mopar 1931 Chrysler coupe, with a blown 392 Hemi engine and four-speed, no less.

HOT SHOE: Former Top Fuel hot shoe Merck Cherkow strikes a pose with his nailhead-powered dragster. He won the partly restored chassis at last year's Meltdown Drags and was the quickest and fastest car at Meltdown 2015. After driving for teams like the Ramchargers and Chuck Kurzawa, Cherkow took a 40-plus-year hiatus, only to come back to the sport in the early 2000s.

Attendance figures topped the 12,000 mark, while temperatures soared into the low 100s with humidity so thick you could cut it with a knife. With threats of rain on Saturday, track owners Ronda and BJ Vangsness offered night racing for the first time as well as erecting a brand new three-story tower.

Want to go next year? Check out meltdowndrags.com.
—BOB MCCLURG



STANDUP STUDE: Tom Hansen's wheelstanding 1942 Studebaker coupe was another crowd favorite, running a career best of 10.75 at 104 on the back bumper. Hansen told us the small-block Chevy-powered Studie was converted into a gasser back in 1961 and has been continuously raced ever since.

★ STANDUP STUDE

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★ ROD VS. ROD

ROD VS. ROD: Hot rod versus hot rod. Vince Eisenreoch and his candy apple red '31 A-Bone became the victim of a Vic Zujewski holeshot driving his bright yellow, fenderless '32 Ford sedan.

GRAND MARSHALS: Meltdown Drags 2015 Grand Marshals "Ohio George" Montgomery, Ed "Cam Father" Iskenderian, and Robert "Bones" Balogh strike a pose for HRD's cameras. All three gents stayed plenty busy signing autographs, bench racing and selling T-shirts and other memorabilia.



★ GRAND MARSHALS



★ OUTHOUSE MOUSE

OUTHOUSE MOUSE: Another crowd pleaser was David Tanner's "Outhouse Mouse" BB/GS 1932 Chevrolet coupe. Smoky burnouts, nice wheelstands and high 8-second runs were the order of the weekend.



★ ORANGE CRATE

ORANGE CRATE: Dave Ver Schave's "Orange Crate" runs 10.40/129.78 like clockwork. The '55 Chevy B/Gasser is powered by a 496ci tunnel-ram Rat motor (rated at 700 hp) backed by a Jerico four-speed and 9-inch with 4.88 gears.

STROPPE MERC: We would like to think that Bob Martin's '56 Mercury E/Gasser is the genuine Bill Stroppe JT 450x, which reached 152 mph speeds back in the day powered by a big-inch, Hilborn-injected Lincoln V-8.

HEART ATTACK: You don't see many mid-'50s Fords competing in the gasser class. One exception is Larry Short's high riding "Heart Attack" '56 Ford B/Gasser, with Y-Block power.

SCENE AT THE MELTDOWN DRAGS (CONT'D)



★ FOG BANK

FOG BANK: Old race cars never die. Great Lakes Gassers member Ron Norman creates his own fog bank driving the ex-Airosa Brothers BB/GS 1941 Willys coupe.



★ STROPPE MERC



★ HEART ATTACK

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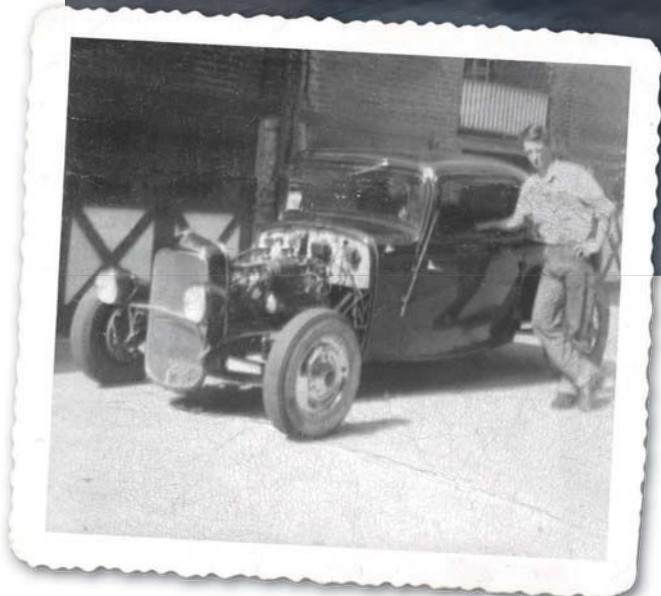
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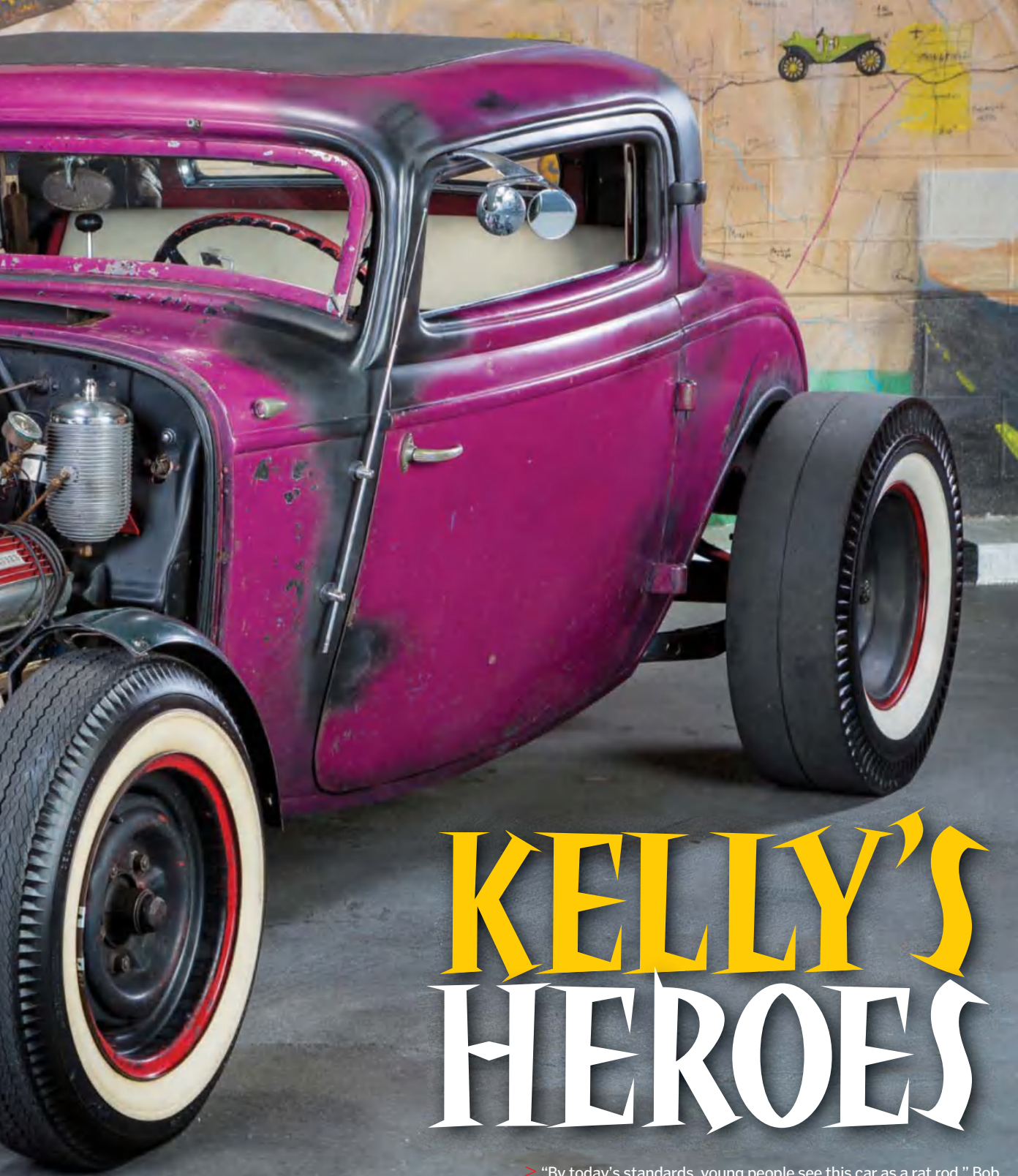


➤ This is the photo of Kelly's coupe that Bob Kasner saw in its 2013 eBay auction. The photo is undated, but the black paint and what looks like a flathead between the frametrails would mean it was likely taken in the late '40s or very early '50s.

CARETAKER.

Bob Kasner is a man of varied tastes when it comes to collecting things. His compound of garages and outbuildings in an industrial corner of Southern California is home to a diverse assortment of high performance vehicles that runs the gamut from a Model T fire engine to a Viper. But there's also a retro-themed diner set up between two garages, a thatched-roof tiki hut outside, and tools





KELLY'S HEROES

> “By today’s standards, young people see this car as a rat rod,” Bob Kasner says of Bill Kelly’s historic chopped and channeled coupe. “But our generation recognizes this as the start of hot rodding post World War II.”

and antique furniture mixed in with the petrolania and vintage speed parts. If there is a common thread to all of this, it seems to be simply the joy the man takes in owning, driving, and tinkering with the things that fill his expansive toy box.

A half-dozen years ago, Bob wanted to augment his collection with what he calls “a real Henry Ford three-window coupe.” While browsing through eBay one day he saw an auction that he thought, at first, was offering a vintage photo of an old hot rod. But it turned out the grainy black-and-white image represented an actual car,

a chopped and channeled Deuce coupe that remained much like when it was originally built in the early days of hot rodding.

Those of you with long-standing subscriptions to *The Rodder’s Journal* may recognize the car from Ken Gross’s “Philadelphia Story” back in Issue 15. But if you compare Steve Coonan’s *TRJ* photography shot in 1997 to Wes Allison’s photos here, you’ll notice a few inches have been taken out of what had been a stock-height roof. That alteration made up just one chapter in a long story that began in Philadelphia back in 1948.



> Bill (that's his shadow on the sidewalk) shot this picture of his coupe in the alley behind Lev's drug store in Philadelphia in 1952. The lighter tone of the coupe's body would indicate it's now wearing its purple paint. The Cad engine is one of several Bill ran in the car.



> Nighttime drags at the Lancaster Drag-O-Way. "That nite we ran 11.97 Cad powered," Bill wrote in his scrapbook. "Not too shabby for a street car in the late '50s."

That's when a 15-year-old named Bill Kelly convinced his father, Thomas Kelly, to buy him a stock '32 Ford coupe for \$200. An avid reader of the hot rodding magazines of the day, Bill knew what he wanted to do with his beat-up Ford, and his father pitched in, too, helping to channel the car. Both Kellys were fans of Stock Car racing at the time, and knew racers who could help the teenager get speed parts.

At first the coupe ran a hot flathead, and Bill won his share of races on the street. But when he started getting beat, the flattie gave way to the instant power infusion that came from an overhead mill. The first was a 303-inch Olds, but when that didn't sate his power hunger, he stepped up to hot-rodded Caddy engines, in blown and unblown trim.

Bill drove the car hard, racing on the street and the strip until the mid 1950s. The coupe's original black lacquer paint job was covered by a distinctive purple skin. But he began to tire of the constant changes the car needed to stay competitive, the fact that it was spending as much time in the shop as it was on the road. So he sold it, and then watched for a few years as a succession of owners raced the car, too. None of them changed it much; different engines went in, and one owner painted the "Deuces Wilde" lettering on the back deck in the '60s. But for the most part, the car stayed as Bill built it.

30-Year Slumber

The next chapter begins some three decades later, in the early 1990s. A New Jersey resident named Gerard Christensen responded to a local classified ad to find a purple Deuce coupe that had been stored for about 30 years. The whitewalls were cracked and discolored, the upholstery dry and brittle, and the big Olds mill between the framersails showed all the signs you'd expect from years of neglect. But Christensen was thrilled.



> Cadillacs were Bill's engine of choice in the day, and there's a Caddy in it again, a 331-inch '49 mill running a Weiand Drag Star manifold, six Strombergs, and Belond headers.



> Bill was a machinist by trade and fabricated many of the parts on his coupe himself, including these drilled and chromed wishbones and the decorative mounts holding them to the framerails.



> More of Bill Kelly's handiwork with custom wishbones is evident under the coupe's back end. Rear juice brakes are from a '39 Lincoln; fronts from a '39 Ford.



> See that c-clamp on the brake drum? It's there to hold the wheel in place should the axle break. Bill was hard on his equipment and twisted axles often.

Two things, though, nagged at him. He wondered about the history of his new find and set out to trace its ownership. As luck would have it, he found a 1949 Pennsylvania registration slip in the car, and that led him to Bill Kelly, still alive and living in his boyhood home in Pennsylvania. Bill was happy to hear his old hot rod had survived the decades and proceeded to fill Christensen in on its story.

The second issue? As Christensen told Ken Gross, he was never a big fan of the East Coast style of channeling a hot rod while leaving the roof at its stock height. So after Coonan photographed the coupe for *TRJ*, Christensen brought the car to Dave Simard at East Coast Customs in Pennsylvania for what Gross called "sympathetic metalwork." Using period-correct techniques, Simard chopped the top 3½ inches. He strove to keep as much of the purple metal as possible, cut the original Ford glass to fit, and retained the vintage speed part decals in the window. Simard also reinforced the car's floor and the framersails within the channeled body to give the car back some structural integrity. The roof insert was repaired (but not filled), and the cowl vent, which had been welded shut, was opened again.

The roof chop aside, Christensen's goal was to keep the coupe as close to Bill's vision as possible. He rebuilt the LaSalle transmission, which had lived in the car ever since Bill did its first OHV transplant, and hooked it to a '49 Cadillac engine. Bill oversaw much of this work, and the two became friends, enjoying the car together for nearly 20 years. During that time the coupe appeared in *Street Rodder* (at the 2006 Ty-Rods Reunion) and in Tom Cotter's book of automotive archaeology, *The Corvette in the Barn*.

Bill's passing in 2010 not only ended his chapter in the coupe's story, but brought about the close of Christensen's chapter, too. Things were different without his friend, his enthusiasm for the car waned, and so the coupe was parked, once again.



> Not a lot of room in a chopped and channeled coupe. The wood supports and chicken wire in the roof are original; the upholstery and instrument panel are Bill's handiwork; and the '57 Ford steering wheel is from a later owner.



> “Hardly anyone has seen this,” Bob Kasner said as he lifted the coupe’s trunklid to reveal a Moon fuel tank and ammo-box tool kit.



> Bill painted his gauge panel using his sister’s glitter—what passed for metalflake in the day—and then filled it with Stewart-Warner instruments. Above the gauges in the center of the dash is an original 1932 Ford cigarette lighter, a very rare piece.

Networking Pays Off

Christensen decided to sell the coupe in 2013, working through a broker in Maryland who placed the eBay ad Bob Kasner saw. Bob jumped right into the auction, but he wasn't the only interested bidder. NASCAR driver Kyle Busch was also after the car. Both had the money needed to close the deal, but Bob discovered an X factor in his favor: Christensen was very interested in where the car would wind up. With a gut feeling that the seller would rather see the car in a hot rodder's garage than in some NASCAR museum, Bob contacted friends of friends he had in the rodding community in Maryland. They put in a good word for him with the broker, and the strategy worked. Christensen himself called Bob to tell him he was the new owner.

"I drove the trailer back there myself," Bob tells us. "I wanted to see the car." Not only did he get the coupe, but also many of the parts Bill Kelly had fabricated but had been removed over the years, like the custom hairpins and the headlight stanchions.

It took Bob eight hours to load up the coupe at Christensen's place in New Jersey. "I don't think he wanted to let it go," says Bob. "And he wanted to show us everything in his collection."

Since then Bob has done little to the car other than remount some of Bill Kelly's parts, keep it running, and admire the work done on it, through all its chapters. "The real story of this car is that it survived all this time. I don't want to change a thing on it," he says.



> Among the badges, fan, and other doo-dads Bill stuck to the windshield header is the car's registration slip. Dated December 2, 1949, it bears the name of Bill's father, Thomas Kelly, as Bill was too young to register the car in his name when he bought it. This slip is how Gerard Christensen found Bill.





> Bob is running 8.00-15 Inglewood cheater slicks on the coupe's back end and 6.40-15 Firestones up front. He has the tires that were on it when it came out of storage, but since he likes to drive the car, fresher rubber was a good idea.



> Dave Simard was careful to preserve as much of Bill's purple paint as he could when he chopped the coupe in the late 1990s. Shortly after he bought it, Bob took the car to rod builder Bobby Walden for an opinion on the metalwork done. "He said it was beautiful art," says Bob. "I'm blessed to be able to pay attention to stuff like that." HRO



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> Joe Sbrigato's roadster is an amalgam of vintage Bowtie and Blue Oval parts. The '31 Chevy body rides atop an original boxed and plated '32 Ford frame, while its front framerails have been home to flathead and SBC power.



THE MAILMAN



SPECIAL



> The roadster's body was channeled, chopped, and sectioned by Joe using just hand tools, and stitched together with rivets. Then he smoothed the body with lead. The result is a beautiful East Coast styled hot rod that won't get lost in any crowd.

> Over the years, engines came and went in the roadster as available horsepower increased dramatically into the '60s (along with Joe's need for speed). Two flatheads were followed by this 327 fuelie motor, sourced from a brand new '63 Vette that met its fate rather early in life. The 365hp small-block is set up with a Weiand Dragstar intake topped with six Strombergs.



SPECIAL DELIVERY.

In 1964, Joe Sbrigato was on a roll. His '31 Chevy roadster was the talk of the fervent local hot rodding scene in his hometown of Brooklyn, New York, and for good reason. After winning Best of Show at the New York Coliseum Rod and Custom extravaganza, he was asked by General Tire to display his car in its booth at the New York World's Fair. The top-tier tire company needed the eye-catching ride to help show off its new line of tires to the massive crowds enjoying the technology-driven show.

While Joe and his wife, Carmela, were attending the fair one night, a mild-mannered young man approached the couple and inquired about their car. "Is it for sale?" the man asked politely. "Oh, no," spouted Joe, "it's not for sale." Taking a second to think, the young man asked if it was possible to rent the car for a night, to use as a prop for a national TV show. Joe was more than open to the idea.

Turns out that quiet, soft-spoken young man was none other than Brian Wilson of The Beach Boys. He asked Joe if he would be willing to bring the car to *The Ed Sullivan Show* in Manhattan, to be used on stage for the band's live performance on their recently released, surf-infused hit, "I Get Around." After a little negotiating, the couple agreed to the deal.

One night prior to the show, Joe was surprised to answer the phone and find Ed Sullivan himself on the line, asking if he had any other hot rodder friends who had cars like his. Imagine the "King of TV" calling your house and asking for a favor. So good ol' Joe managed to get a couple of his drag racer buddies' rides on the show as well. It was an amazing experience for him, and one that has never been forgotten in the Sbrigato family household.

Junkyard Chevy

When Joe got his army discharge in 1948, he returned to his hometown of Brooklyn, where he began working for the postal service. Wanting to build a hot rod, he found a suitable "builder"

Chevy roadster in the Luna Park junkyard on Surf Avenue in Coney Island. The asking price: just 15 bucks.

He brought the carcass back to his home on Lancaster Avenue, where he dismantled the car and slowly built up his vision of a true hot rod. Remarkably, he built it without welding equipment or any power tools. He installed the Chevy roadster body atop a '32 Ford frame, which had been shortened, completely boxed, and fully plated in polished stainless steel.

A drilled, dropped, and plated axle was the basis of the front-end build. A set of '48 Mercury hydraulic brakes did the stopping, which were pushed by a late '50s T-bird brake booster. Out back, a '48 Mercury rear stuffed with 4.11 gears was in charge of getting the power to the wheels, while a '22 Model T rear spring handled the suspension duties. The bones of this beach cruiser were starting to come together.

The body was a work of pure creativity. Because things like power tools, a torch, or a welder were pipe dreams to a civil servant back then, Joe used a hacksaw to section the car 6 six inches and channel the body over the frame 4 inches. The top was also chopped 2 inches from stock. Reassembly was done using just standard pop rivets. Finish work was done in lead, a material with which Joe was a pro.

After he smoothed the body, he was ready for paint. At first Joe painted the roadster gloss black, but years later decided it needed a lighter hue. A fresh Goldwood Yellow lacquer skin was done with spray cans ordered from the J.C. Whitney catalog. The grille shell is an interesting piece. It was made from two original shells, each cut in half, with both top pieces molded together after sectioning 3 inches out of the center. A custom stainless steel cover was made for the front of the grille.

Covering the front tires is an original set of Harley-Davidson motorcycle fenders. Headlamps are from a '34 Ford truck, and the roadster has a pair of HD signal lights to boot. Out back, '50



➤ A drilled and dropped '32 Ford front axle, plated in show chrome, is the basis for the front-end setup. Joe originally used Merc brakes when he built the car; now a pair of Corvette front brakes is hidden nicely by Buick finned drums. A chromed '32 Ford leaf spring has been reshaped to help give the roadster its rake. Shocks are Pete and Jakes. A Unisteer system ties it all together and keeps this hot rod pointed in the right direction.



> Joe said long ago that he always admired the Ford dashboards of the early '40s.

So when son John restored the roadster, he took out the Caddy dash Joe had put in and replaced it with a '40 Ford dash, complete with hidden Moon gauges and painted to match the car's yellow color. The upholstery is the original pleated style that his dad had in the roadster over the years.



> Chrome reverse rims were the deal back when Joe built the car; the radials are a concession to John's desire to keep it on the road. When John twisted the axle in the '48 Merc rearend during a drag race, he upgraded the driveline with a Chevy 12-bolt.



> Joe Sbrigato stands on his street in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, with two of the many trophies he acquired with his stunning Mailman Special. These two beauties were for Best Hot Rod and Best of Show, both won at the 1964 New York Hot Rod and Custom Show at the New York Coliseum in Manhattan. John still carries these trophies with the car on occasion.

Pontiac taillights grace the lower deck. The car rides on 15-inch chrome plated and reversed Ford rims.

The dash went through some changes over the years, with Joe deciding on a '62 Caddy piece later on in the '60s. The interior was a beautiful amalgam of rolls and pleats, done to compliment the light yellow exterior. The white convertible top was custom made to match the rest of the stunning cockpit.

For motor-vation, Joe first decided on a flathead out of a '32 Ford. After hopping it up to the max, he still couldn't get it to where it would perform to his liking on the dragstrip. Next up was another flattie, this one out of a '49 Mercury. It gave him more punch, but as engines became increasingly more powerful heading into the '60s, Joe once again was ready for a change. In 1963 he got what he was looking for—a 327 fuelie motor out of a crashed split-window Corvette. At 365 hp, the motor proved to be plenty powerful for the lightweight hot rod, both on the streets and on the strip.

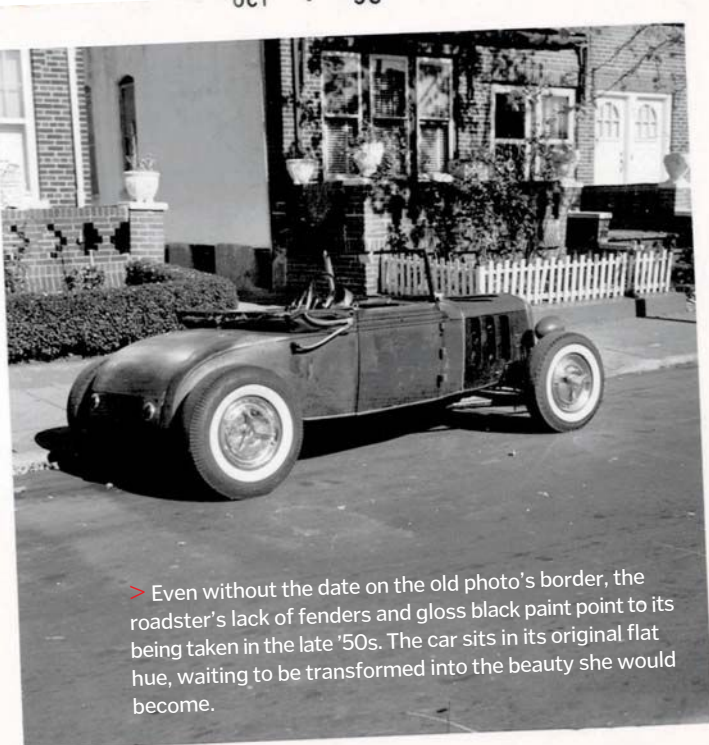
Joe showed the roadster whenever possible, and it garnered a ton of awards. Joe's son John remembers the family living room was better known as the trophy room, a place where Joe kept all the hardware won at the events he attended. It was all out in the open, for all to see, and Joe wanted it that way. He was humbly proud of the car and his accomplishments.

Kansas Detour

The roadster was retired from the show circuit in the early '70s. The little Chevy was still in amazing condition, and Joe swore he would keep it that way. But circumstances change, and the car was sold to a collector in Kansas a few years later. John was just 12 years old at the time and had grown fond of the car. He sadly remembers the day the car left.

The hot rod sat in a Chevy dealership in Kansas for five years as an attraction. Though it was out of sight, it was never out of mind for John. "This car was a big part of our family as well as a big





> Even without the date on the old photo's border, the roadster's lack of fenders and gloss black paint point to its being taken in the late '50s. The car sits in its original flat hue, waiting to be transformed into the beauty she would become.

chunk of my childhood. Most of the history took place before I was born, though all my life it still fascinated me. Every time my parents told me a story about the car, it was pure fun and good times."

When John was 17 he was working in Brooklyn at his own body shop, Brighton Collision. A gentleman named Bobby walked in and asked him if he was Joe's son. When John said he was, the man then asked him if he would like to buy his dad's old roadster back. John was floored. He agreed to a deal on the spot, which was for the same price his father had sold it for. The Chevy was coming home.

Joe was stunned with the good news. John ponied up for the roadster, and it was delivered to the house in Brooklyn. Amazingly, the car looked just like it did the day it left for Kansas. Not a trace of any damage or augmentation. It was exactly the way his dad had built it.

John drove the car constantly around Brooklyn, hitting the local car shows, cruise nights, and the dragstrip. Though it was a family heirloom, he never babied the car. He treated it well, but used it for what it was intended: he drove it! However, his right foot would finally catch up to the Chevy. One night at the corner of McDonald and Shell Road in Brooklyn, he met a foe for a quick drag race.

> Joe belonged to the Roaring 20's hot rod club based out of Long Island. Here his beloved roadster sits with club member's cars back in the summer of 1961.



> Joe and his wife, Carmela, take in the scenery at Marine Park in Brooklyn back in 1962. The car sports a gloss black finish and the Harley fenders over each wheel. The following year, Joe would tear down the hot rod and paint it its present day tint.



> While still painted black, Joe's award-winning roadster was featured on the cover of *Rods Illustrated*.



> Joe's roadster wound up on *The Ed Sullivan Show* with the Beach Boys after Brian Wilson saw the hot rod on display at the New York World's Fair. Sullivan himself called Joe to line up more cars for the night's "really big shoo."

> When Joe decided his black roadster needed a lighter hue, he picked out Goldwood Yellow out of the J.C. Whitney catalog and laid down the paint using ordinary spray cans. That paint job lasted through the '60s and its show days. In 1972 he decided to paint the Chevy red, and that's the way it looked when he sold it, and when son John bought it back.

While smoking the tires to heat up the skins, he twisted the axle into two pieces, catapulting one rear wheel down the street. John's remedy for the situation was to install a 12-bolt Chevy rearend to handle the power from the small-block fuelie motor.

Freshen-Up

The car remained a big part of John's life. His father passed on when he was 27, and John continued to keep the car in running condition. After 10 more years, he decided that the car needed a freshen-up, so he brought it to his shop and started the restoration.

He was careful to keep the car as original as possible, while making it more road compatible. For instance, John went through the 327 and mounted a Weiand Dragstar intake topped by six Stromberg carbs. A Cal Custom dress-up kit adds a little bling to an already stunning engine bay. And now behind the fuelie is a Turbo 350 transmission.

John also used a '40 Ford dash in the rebuild, which was meticulously narrowed to fit the roadster, and customized to handle all the gauges. It was a special touch that his dad always wanted to do. The beautiful white convertible top was executed by Gene Tasso of Gilin Custom Design upholstery, based in Middletown, New York.

John says that the roadster making its way back to Brooklyn was just meant to be. "The joy that this little Chevy has brought my family is immeasurable," he states. John is proud to be the flame keeper of one nifty hot rod, one that was "specially delivered" back to his possession. **HRD**



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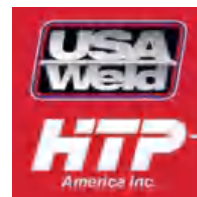
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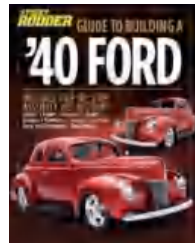
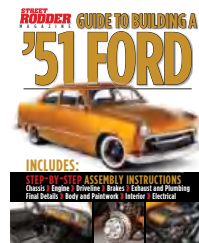


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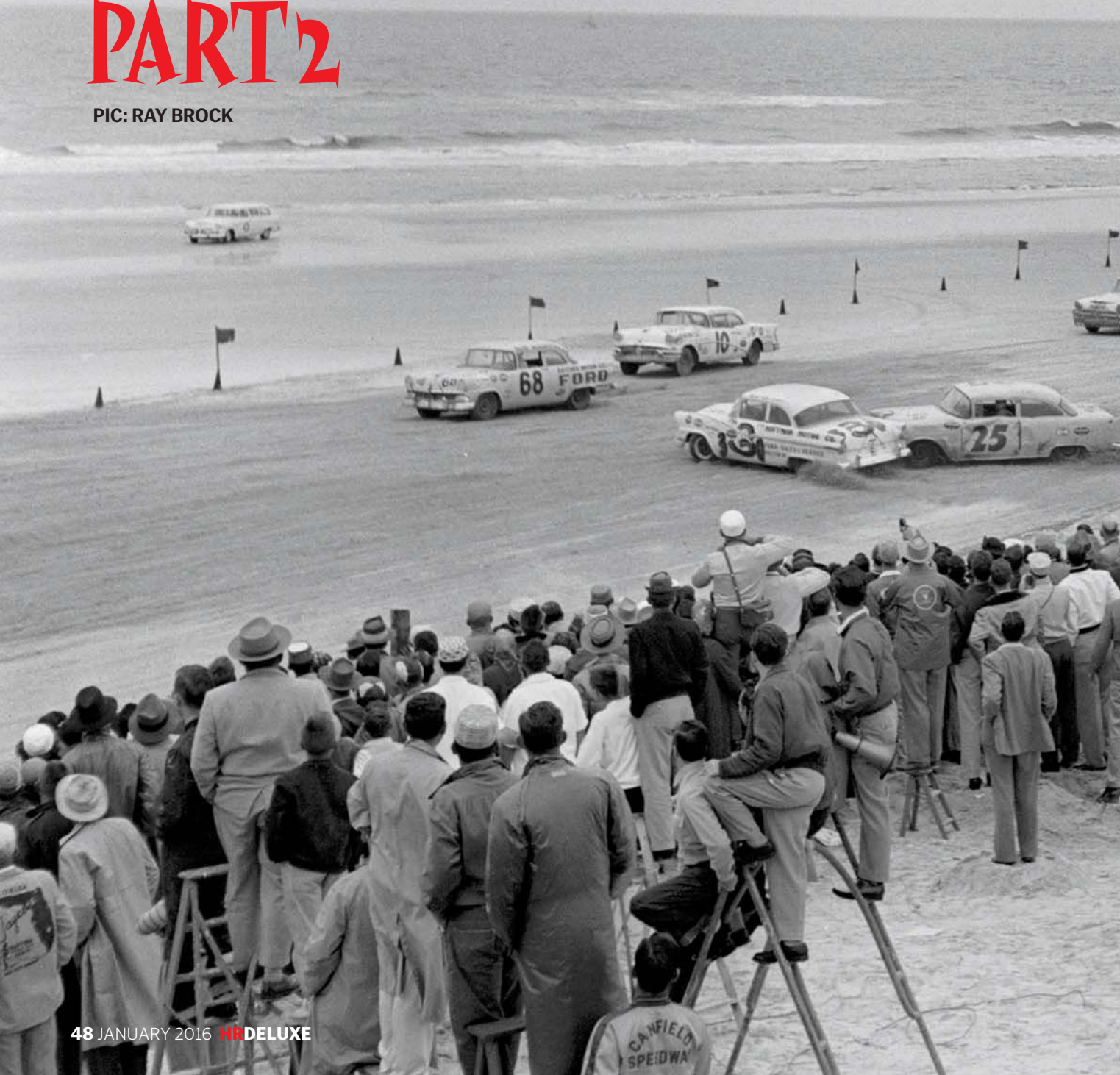


POWER STRUGGLES

- WORDS: DAVE WALLACE
- PICS: PETERSEN PUBLISHING CO. ARCHIVE
- RESEARCH HELP: GREG SHARP AND THOMAS VOEHRINGER

PART 2

PIC: RAY BROCK



1956

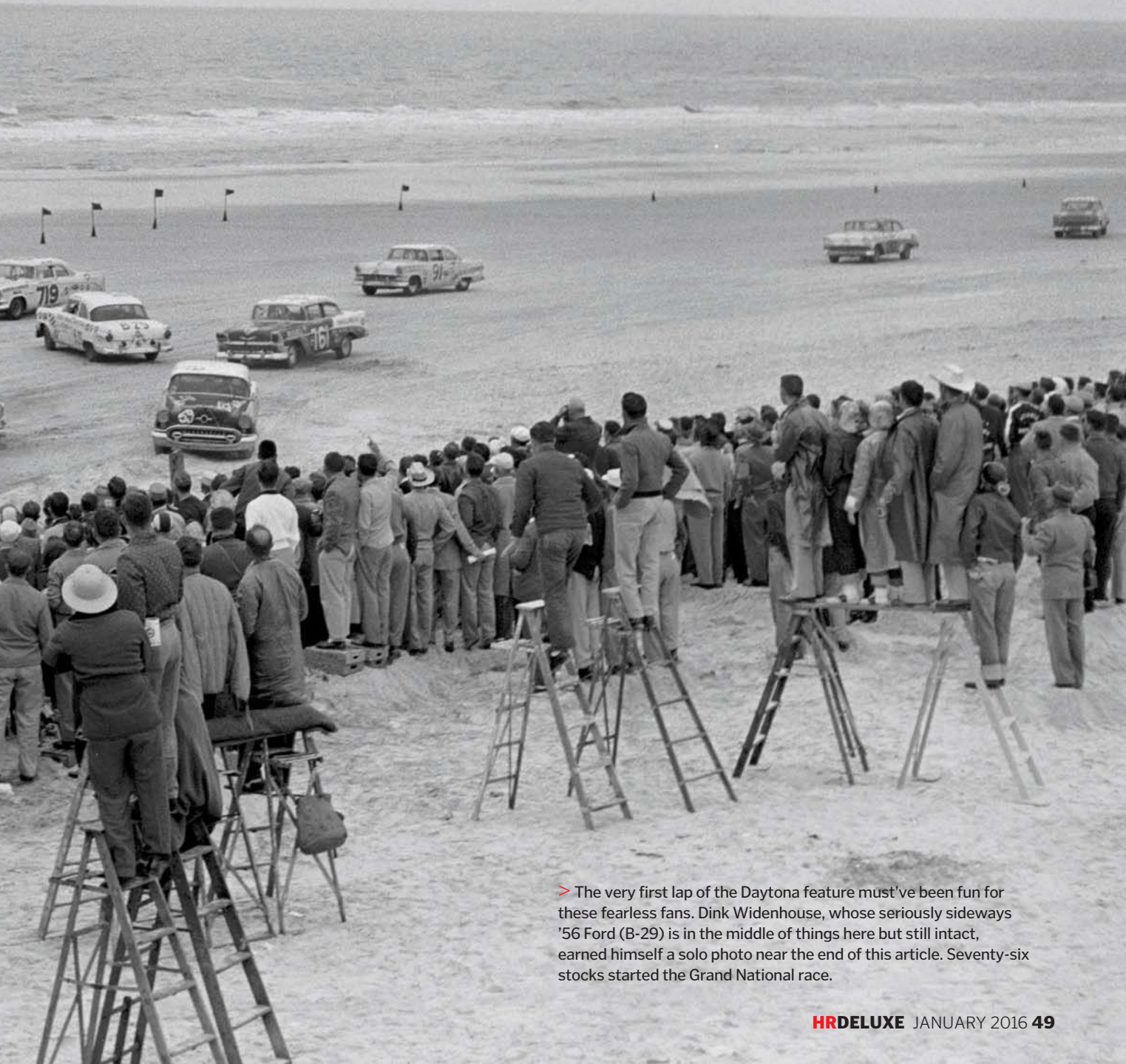
Welcome to the season that saw auto racing explode, for better and worse. Detroit devoted bigger R&D budgets to favored racers—NASCAR teams, in particular—then spent unprecedented ad dollars tying track performance to identical-looking '56 models in showrooms. Pikes Peak was suddenly crawling with factory folks. Drag racing continued evolving from a deviant, participant-driven fad into a semirespectable spectator sport whose young-male demographic made ad agencies drool. Staging lanes coast to coast swelled with '55 and '56 Chevys. Nitromethane was in the air everywhere.

Ironically, the timing that seemed so right this year was all wrong for seasons to follow. The elephant in the room was death. Bill Vukovich's fatal Indy 500 crash was followed two weeks later by the fiery, filmed LeMans disaster that killed 84 and shocked millions. Drag-racing casualties were all too common. Major publications and networks that never covered a race never seemed to miss a racing death. Now, politicians, regulators, law-enforcement

officials, and the uninformed public were connecting the carnage to the high-performance cars coming from Detroit; more specifically, to the ads glorifying speed by racers blatantly sponsored by automakers.

You can feel the heat building in back issues of *HOT ROD* (or the digital versions viewable at Club.HotRod.com). Editor Wally Parks' next-to-last editorial of the year begins, "Regular readers of this column will undoubtedly have noticed that each month finds something new for us to be hacked at—we're constantly defending or condemning." That Nov. '56 column concerned a resolution passed by a committee of the International Association of Chiefs of Police "which attempts to discredit the effectiveness of organized drag strips as a contributor to improved highway safety." Worse, this same committee was calling on police departments to outlaw the tracks.

Back in April, the gripe was an article about hot rodders playing "chicken" that ran in the *Saturday Evening Post* and was now "being made into a motion picture." (*Rebel Without a Cause*, maybe?)



> The very first lap of the Daytona feature must've been fun for these fearless fans. Dink Widenhouse, whose seriously sideways '56 Ford (B-29) is in the middle of things here but still intact, earned himself a solo photo near the end of this article. Seventy-six stocks started the Grand National race.

Wally adds that “a leading recording company has just released a ‘chicken’ record.” In the next issue, a column entitled “Let’s Get The Story Straight!” defends law-abiding hot rodders unfairly accused of rioting and vandalism in Daytona. Finally, December’s editorial blasts the California Highway Patrol commissioner, who’s quoted stating that the CHP “started pulling away from the drag strip idea some time ago because there was considerable evidence they did nothing except encourage speed competition.”

HOT ROD’s editor and the automakers were right to worry. American racing was, in fact, facing its first existential crisis. Wally

knew that behind the scenes, automakers were scrambling to hammer out some voluntary plan of inaction that would hopefully head off government intervention. Demonstrating extraordinary cooperation, the Automobile Manufacturers Association imposed rules forbidding race-related advertising and direct support of racers after 1956. The infamous AMA Ban prompted wholesale dumping of competitive stock cars and introduced secretive, “back-door” parts programs that made superstars out of a favored few. Join us next time for previously unseen images that document auto racing’s new struggles, both on and off the track.



> The Los Angeles area was still home to a majority of champ-car builders. Eric Rickman made the rounds each spring, gathering construction shots for HRM’s annual sneak peek at Indy 500 hardware (June ‘56). The street in front of A.J. Watson’s Glendale shop was all the background he needed to shoot the super-light John Zink Special that would finish first. Though Pat Flaherty averaged only 128.490 mph in a race interrupted repeatedly by spins and wrecks caused by tire failures, *Motor Trend*’s subsequent coverage (Aug. ‘56) revealed that he’d made “hundreds of test laps around 143 mph” at IMS as Firestone’s test pilot. Magnesium body panels (other than an aluminum nose and tail) kept rolling weight under 1,700 pounds, less fluids.



> Chevrolet Engineering chose Edelbrock Equipment Co., one of the few aftermarket manufacturers with its own engine dyno, to develop the first 265ci V-8 modified specifically for straight-line record setting (in lakes racer Tom Cobbs’ coupe). Vic Jr., a fulltime USC student, was yanking the throttle cable on this carbureted small-block when HRM Technical Editor Racer Brown visited in early April.



> Yes, you might’ve seen one or both photos in print, but probably not together. This unstaged “turn of events” was captured in consecutive frames on a 12-shot roll that Rickman exposed at the new San Gabriel strip. Whatever he perched upon afforded the perfect angle when Calvin Rice suddenly shifted attention from Doug Hartelt’s Potvin-blown Hemi, which set top speed of 147.54 this weekend, to the trusty flathead that won NHRA’s ‘55 Nationals.



> Here's one Rickman photo that has appeared in print, though way small (Sept. '56 HRM). It's our favorite frame from Pikes Peak. Gordon Herring wheeled the 4WD, Cadillac-powered Bandimere Special to Seventh place in the Championship Car division, covering the 12.42-mile course in 15:06.0 minutes.



> Nothing here suggests the acrimony to come between Scotty Fenn (far right) and the Yeakel Cadillac Specialists team led by Lou Baney (third from left), nor the media war later waged by Fenn and Wally Parks (with movie camera). Baney, Kenny Arnold (seated), and their crew are celebrating a big Top Eliminator win at San Gabriel's West Coast Regional Championship Drags (Aug. '56 HRM) with a rail that Scotty built for himself before leaving Oklahoma. Considered the prototype for Chassis Research Co.'s popular TE-440 model—short for "Top Eliminator, 440 Yards"—this Cad-powered slingshot evolved into the Cook & Bedwell car.



> The miles per hour logged inside the door of "Jazzy" Jim Nelson's Fiat fuel coupe illustrate what little attention was being paid to elapsed times, which aren't listed. Ironically, it was this year's controversial, unprecedented, unbelievable e.t. of 9.10 seconds at San Fernando—as advertised by Isky in the Mar. '56 HRM—that made Jazzy famous. A legitimate 10-second performer, this was one of the last flathead cars capable of outrunning Chrysler and Cadillac dragsters.



> Behold state-of-the-art 1956 electronics. Jimmie Riley, a Fresno TV/radio technician, rolled into Madera (shown) and other temporary Central Valley tracks with complete timing and public-address systems.



> Racer Brown visited drag racing's two leading grinders for a great tech piece entitled, "Choose The Right Cam" (Sept. '56). Subsequent advertising banter between Ed Iskenderian and Howard Johansen in HRM and *Drag News* ignited the Camgrinder Wars. In 1958, the same combatants inadvertently started the Gasser Wars (as we shall see in coming installments).





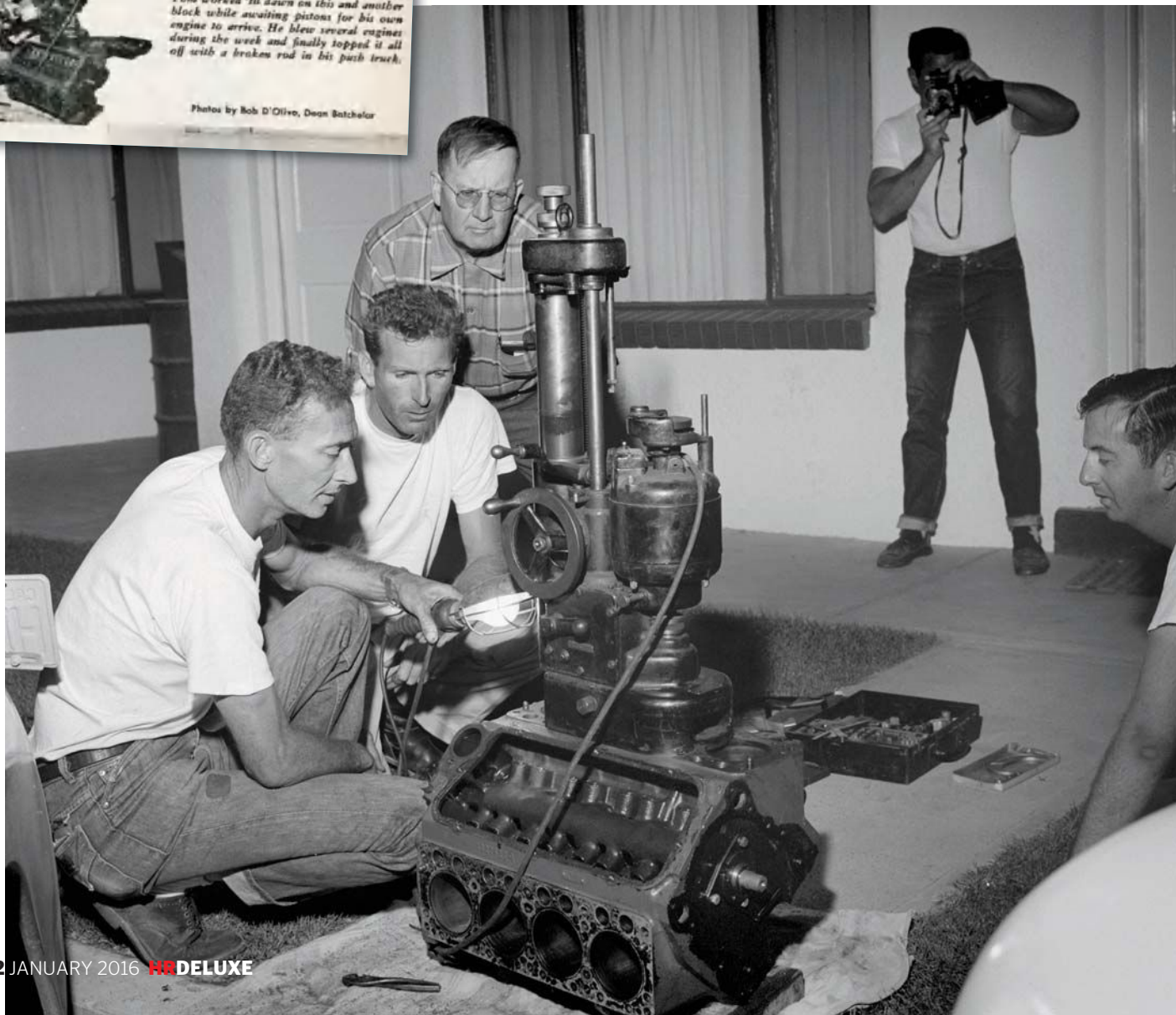
> If you were running a rail this year, the last thing you wanted to see in the other lane was a Model T. One of the first back-motored cars to go fast, go straight, and go rounds, Red Henslee's Chrysler-powered modified roadster shattered speed records at Santa Ana (155 mph) and Long Beach (157) on consecutive summer weekends with brave Emery Cook driving. Six months later at Lions, Cook pushed his own record to 166.97 in Cliff Bedwell's slingshot.



> Strolling through Bonneville's pits, HRM's Dean Batchelor may have discovered the perfect wife. Carol Harrison also stitched the rolls and pleats in hubby Bill's Hemi-powered '21 Dodge. Bob D'Olivo shot a full feature on the salt (Feb. '57 HRM: "Time Bomb").

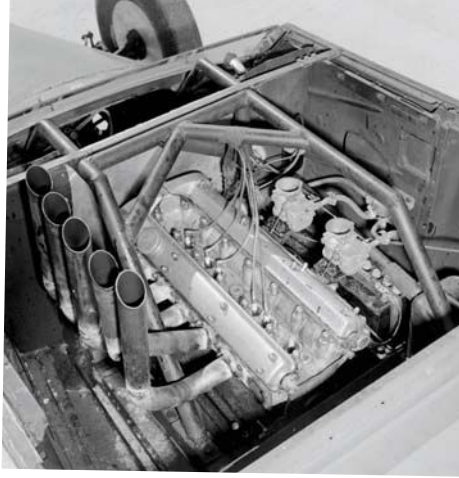


> Contrary to the Dec. '56 *Car Craft* caption, the undoctored scene seems more inside than outside Wendover's Western Motel. Tom Beatty (left) was a master machinist and among the first racers to successfully adapt a top-mounted GMC supercharger.

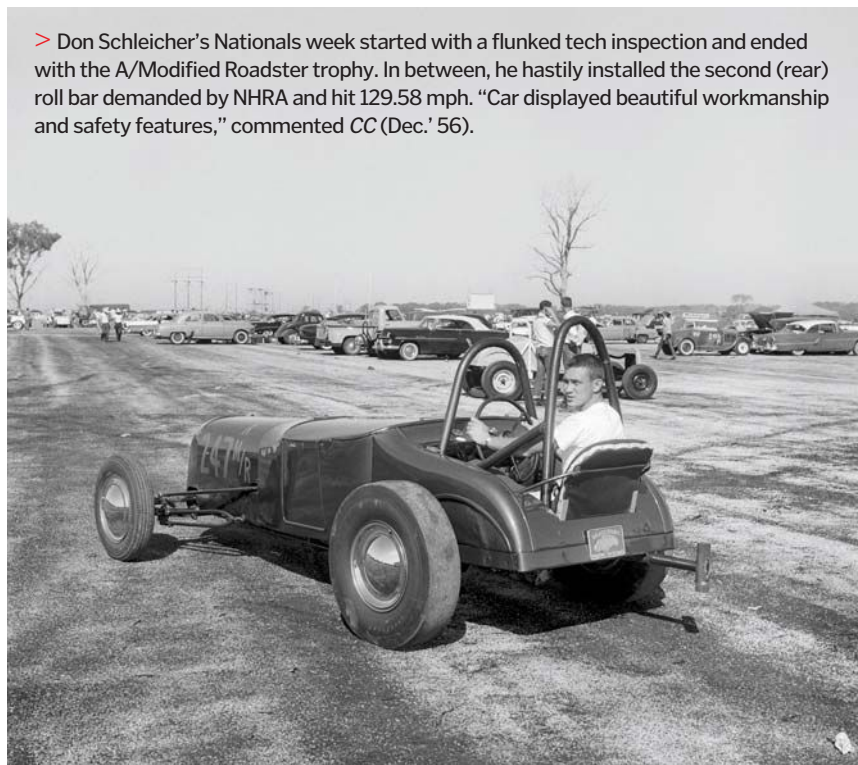




> NHRA Museum curator Greg Sharp had to dig deep to identify this one. His complete *Rod & Custom* collection came through with this Dec. '56 caption: "Milliken Special from Cucamonga, California, was powered by a Jaguar engine running on only five cylinders to enable the engine to fit in A class (maximum displacement allowed in this class is 183 cu. in.) It was the very first time out for the engine and it still needs many bugs worked out. Top speed was 89.82 mph." That's not too far under a record of just over 100, Greg notes, adding, "Only at Bonneville would you see a dual-overhead-cam, European engine with Strombergs and a missing plug wire."



> NHRA moved its national event to Kansas City after losing Great Bend to the feisty American Hot Rod Association. Bob Alsenz drove Ken Lindley's Potvin-blown "Miss-Fire II" to the meet's top speed and a new world record of 159.01, but lost the Top Eliminator final to Mel Heath. The L.A.-based fueler with Competition Body Shop paint and Von Dutch graphics did earn *Motor Trend's* Best Engineered Car trophy and a future HRM feature (Jan. '57).



> Don Schleicher's Nationals week started with a flunked tech inspection and ended with the A/Modified Roadster trophy. In between, he hastily installed the second (rear) roll bar demanded by NHRA and hit 129.58 mph. "Car displayed beautiful workmanship and safety features," commented CC (Dec. '56).

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

As required by Title 39, Section 3685 United States Code below is the Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation of Hot Rod Deluxe.

1. Publication Title: Hot Rod Deluxe
2. Publication Number: 1546-5063.
3. Filing Date: 10/01/15
4. Issue Frequency: Bi-monthly
5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 6
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$39.95
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication:
261 Madison Avenue, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10016-2303.
Contact Person: Brian Laboe/212-915-4182
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher:
TEN: The Enthusiast Network, LLC, 831 S. Douglas St., El Segundo, CA 90245
9. Publisher: Jeff Dahlin/831 S. Douglas St., El Segundo, CA 90245;
Editor: Drew Hardin/831 S. Douglas St., El Segundo, CA 90245;
Managing Editor: Michelle McCarthy/831 S. Douglas St., El Segundo, CA 90245;
10. Owner: TEN: The Enthusiast Network, Inc. 831 S. Douglas St., El Segundo, CA 90245
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities: None ☒
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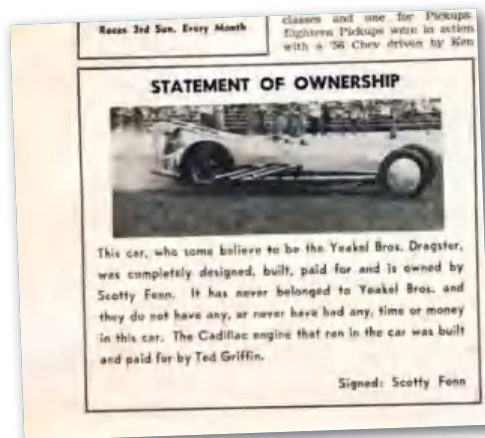
13. Publication Title: Hot Rod Deluxe
 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: September 2015
 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation:
- | | Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months | No. of Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date |
|---|--|--|
| a. Total number of copies | 112,272 | 107,692 |
| b. Paid Circulation (by mail and outside the mail) | | |
| 1. Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 | 8,744 | 9,175 |
| 2. Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 | 0 | 0 |
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| e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution | 176 | 246 |
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| g. Copies not Distributed | 76,990 | 72,230 |
| h. Total | 112,272 | 107,692 |
| i. Percent Paid | 99.5% | 99.3% |

16. Extent and Nature of Circulation:
- | | Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months | No. of Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date |
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| a. Paid Electronic Copies | 455 | 634 |
| b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a) | 35,561 | 35,850 |
| c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a) | 35,738 | 36,096 |
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Thomas Slater, SVP Consumer Marketing 10-1-2015

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> A correction is in order here—and way, way overdue. Because Nationals event coverage described the blonde as “starlet Barbara Huffman,” writers and editors always assumed her to be the former Barbara Huffman who later played the sexy genie in *I Dream of Jeannie*. However, archivist Thomas Voehringer failed to see the resemblance and resolved to track down series-star Barbara Eden. After e-mailing these photos to her fan club, the lady herself called to confirm that her name had, indeed, been Huffman—but she’d never been to Kansas City, nor anybody’s trophy girl. Meanwhile, back at the track, the queen was sitting beside Wally Parks when HRM’s resident ladies’ man, Eric Rickman, tore her attention away from waiting photographers. She also worked NHRA’s postrace banquet, where Rick found her visiting with Robert E. Petersen’s longtime attorney, Bob Gottlieb.



> Sixty years later, this Oct. 5 *Drag News* ad corrects a common mistake made by publications including this one (and by writers including this one!). The late-season timing hints that Scotty Fenn might’ve expected the Yeakels to pay for a car they raced all year, or had some other beef with team-leader Lou Baney. We’d love to hear both sides of that story, but these colorful characters are long gone.



> It’s not easy to stump Greg Sharp, but this deal did it. All we’ve found in archived Nationals film is a similar pit photo, from the opposite side—leading us to wonder whether the mystery car flunked tech or was otherwise unable to run. (Help, readers?)

> The ride home from Missouri must’ve been a long, quiet one. We wonder whether that hammer was used to finish the job.



> A few weeks after boldly boasting to Chevrolet executives in Pebble Beach that a couple of magazine guys could road race a Corvette better than the Midwestern-based factory team performed in its first SCCA event, GM delivered a special one to HRM staffers Racer Brown (seated) and Bob D'Olivo. After a disappointing initial outing on original tires, Bob Pollack won regularly in California Sports Car Club competition, while Dick Thompson earned enough combined SCCA points driving both the

Eastern and Western cars to bring Corvette its first national championship—at the expense of Mercedes, whose exotic 300 SL coupes were supposed to dominate C-Production. Among other modifications made in D'Olivo's home garage over the course of this historic season, the heavy windshield was replaced with a tiny windscreen supplied by Chevrolet Engineering. (Tech Editor Brown details the others in the Oct. '56 HRM: "Rod Testing a 'STOCK' Corvette.")



> This might be the smokiest launch captured on Petersen-issued film to date. Skinny recaps are being tortured by a front-blown Hemi sucking through five carbs. The Torres & Lawry rail trophied in A/Open Gas Dragster at Colton's Southern California Championship Drags and set top speed on gasoline at 129.68 (Feb. '57 HRM).

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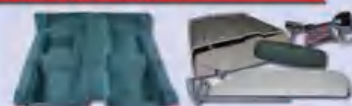
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BEACH PARTY★

Unaccustomed as we are to spotlighting NASCAR, the Speed Weeks (plural) of February 1956 rate some space. The city of Daytona Beach turned 10 miles of sand over to Bill France Sr. for straight-line acceleration (below), side-by-side drag racing, and three different oval-track events on a combination-beach-and-road course. While hugely successful, the circus was not without incident. Said *M/T* (May '56): "A riot broke out in Daytona (falsely attributed to teen-aged hot-rodders) that got more publicity than the speed. With an uncooperative beach and an unruly group, Bill France had more than his share of headaches, but

judging from the explosion of automotive advertising since then, almost everyone went home pretty much contented."

Editorial Director Wally Parks went further in his May '56 HRM editorial, scolding NASCAR for allowing fans "within 10 or 20 feet of the speed course, with 155-mph cars," and for failing to provide sufficient nighttime activities for restless young people. Referring to the recent crash that claimed 84 lives, he concluded, "Daytona was lucky: they got off with a mere teenage riot when there could easily have been another LeMans catastrophe."

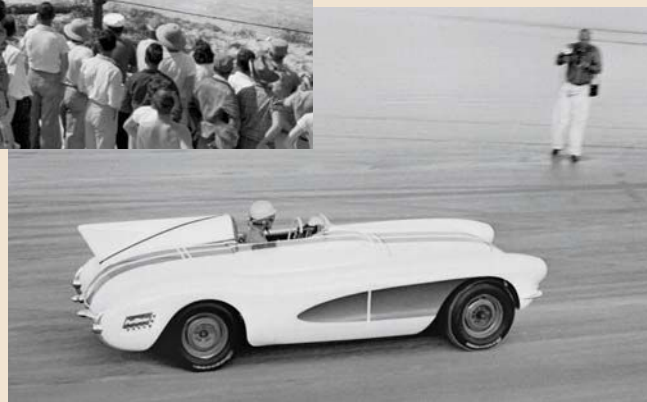


> Reacting to internal rumors that GM management was considering cancelling his pet program in the wake of disappointing 1953-'55 sales, Zora Arkus-Duntov proposed a crash racing program to attract attention and inspire customer enthusiasm. Ed Cole approved, directing Chevrolet Engineering to prepare '56 models with matching paint schemes for ex-Mercedes star John Fitch, Betty Skelton, and Zora himself. Strong showings both here and at the Sebring 12 Hours were widely credited for the sudden sales uptick that literally saved the Corvette.



> The debut of NASCAR's Convertible division produced an entertaining variety of 28 models, as illustrated by this tight trio of (from left) Larry Frank ('55 Olds), Gene Blair ('55 Merc), and George Bumgardner ('54 Buick). Ragtops ran the same 4.1-mile course and 160-mile distance as the Grand National hardtops. Joe Weatherly set the qualifying pace at 117.801, but Curtis Turner averaged 96.052 and edged Fireball Roberts in a one-two finish for Ford.

> With Zora at the wheel, Chevrolet's "experimental" entry topped 150 mph one way, averaging 147.300 for both directions. The trick tonneau, headrest, and tail fin were fiberglass.





> Defending NASCAR champion Tim Flock dominated three different Daytona categories in three cars. Our favorite is Joe Wolf's '39 Chevy, designed more like a drag-race altered than a NASCAR modified. The injected Olds and the driver were set way back for maximum traction in sand. Tim qualified first (137.405) among 70 starters, then easily topped the 125-mile modified-sportsman-combo undercard. These photos are outtakes from HRM's subsequent car feature. Switching to a big Chrysler 300-B for the main Grand National event, Flock grabbed another pole (135.747) and another checkered flag. He proved equally adept going straight, setting overall top speed for production cars in team owner Carl Kiekhaefer's personal 300-B, averaging 139.373.



> Dink Widenhouse's 34th-place Grand National finish was somewhat miraculous after two spinouts and whatever contact caused this temporary obstruction. Wally Parks got the shot, and another from the same spot after the Ford had shed its hood.



> Smokey Yunick showed up with a shaved, lowered '56 Cameo that topped all trucks, hitting 116 mph in the flying mile.

> "But when a few rock-hurling inebriates stirred up a storm in a small town loaded with newsmen and photographers, imaginations ran rampant and respectable *hot rodding* all over the world suffered the beating, for the sake of a headline!" (May '56 HRM: "The Editor Says") Yes, Wally, but what a headline! **HRM**



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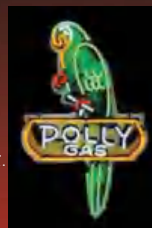
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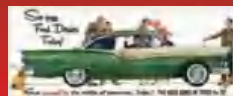
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> Mike Goyda sits among his personal collection of hot rod and drag race memorabilia. The pieces he deals in are authentic; none are reproductions.

THE TREASURED

AUTHENTIC.

The rolling hills of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, are best known as a tourist destination to see the Amish folk, eat at sprawling smorgasbords, and ride steam trains at Strasburg. They also play host to some of the best-known antique businesses and auctions in North America. So for Mike Goyda, the 19th century farmhouse he calls home would seemingly be the perfect location as the base for a successful antique business. It was the prevalence of fine antiques that brought him to Lancaster. When he later decided to deal exclusively in hot rod and drag racing

memorabilia, the area proved to be a gold mine of that material as well, due to the number of dragstrips within a 100-mile radius of his home and the long history of hot rodding.

For many years, Mike did the “real antique” thing in places like Adamstown, Pennsylvania, and Brimfield, Massachusetts: 18th century furniture, 19th century quilts, big-dollar pottery (he still holds the unofficial record for the highest-selling price for a single piece of American stoneware), and much more. But his siren call was to grow jobs and dry lakes specials, famous personalities of street and strip, real Americana and folk art with performance as its focus. Today this, coupled with his professional background, has made him perhaps the premier locator and purveyor of this material in the country.



In the antique business, two things above all others drive price: condition and rarity. Quality matters, and in vintage racing and hot rod memorabilia, authenticity is key. Mike doesn't sell reprints or modern recreations of any sort; his business is based primarily (but not exclusively) on pre-1975 material.

"Hot rod movie posters are what started my business back in 1992," he recalls. "I wanted to decorate the garage I had just built. I saw a magazine story where somebody had them hanging in their living room. They were cool. So about a month later, I was set up at an antique show, and a friend of mine was selling some movie posters. A dealer came up and took a bunch of them. I asked if he had any hot rod posters. He said he did and would send photos.

"You need to understand, I was still dealing in folk art, worth many thousands of dollars for some pieces," Mike continues. "I was getting the same reaction in my gut to the hot rod stuff that I got when I found a great piece of folk art. So I assumed these had to be worth a lot of money—\$500 or so each. Instead, he tells me they were all selling for between \$35 and \$45 apiece. That got my attention, so I bought four from him. I started getting a bi-weekly movie collecting periodical and found a ton of them. I framed several to hang in the garage, and I had my friend Dick Gerwer come by to see them. He asked if I could find him a few, and suddenly I was dealing in them.

"Eventually I was buying everything I could find. That started it, then I began getting into the car club jackets and club plaques. The rest is history."

In addition to the pieces Mike buys and sells, he has his own personal collection, housed in a semi-rotating display in a large carpeted garage, which doubles as a sort of museum for invited guests and visiting customers. The rare apparel, the hard-to-find posters, car club memorabilia, early NHRA Nationals gear, and peculiarities of all sorts fill most of the space. The items highlighted here are just a few of his remarkable treasures.

Clothing is King

"The primitive art on the earlier car club jackets and plaques, the older 'boxing style' cardstock racing and show posters; those were the things attracted me to this stuff," says Mike. "But the Hop-Ups jacket got me hooked on apparel."

Mike was attracted to some of the original car club jackets he saw in magazine photos. Contacts with vintage clothing dealers he knew didn't pan out, but they informed him that club jackets were worth around \$50. So he ran ads in bigger antique weekly papers: "Car Club Jackets wanted. Will pay \$200 each."



> This club jacket, from a small Baltimore-area club formed in 1954, was the one that got Mike hooked on collecting hot rod and drag race apparel. When the owner told Mike on the phone he wanted just \$12.50 for it, Mike figured it must have been a tattered rag. Its condition was a pleasant surprise when it arrived. In general, Mike feels the clothing's condition doesn't have much bearing on its value.



> This is the "Almost 170 MPH" jacket Mickey Thompson gave Tommy Ivo at Lions. Thompson handed out commemorative jackets to racers who broke milestone speed barriers, and TV Tommy missed out on the 150- and 160-mph jackets. When he ran 169 and change he feared he would miss out on the 170 jacket, too, so Thompson had this one made for him.

"Soon after, this gentleman near Baltimore answers my ad by mail with a little drawing and says, 'I have one in rough condition that was mine when I was a kid, and I want \$12.50 for it.' I figured this thing must be in real tatters. Well, when it got here, I knew right away how wonderful it was, stains and all. I called him and got the story. He and about six friends had formed the club back in 1954, and it had been his personal jacket. He asked if I was happy with it. I said yes, very much so, and then sent him a second check for \$187.50 with a note saying I had said in the ad I would pay \$200 and that it was worth that to me. Over the next 15 years he found seven other early car club jackets for me. The jackets are worth a bit more than \$200 now, though."

One of Mike's most treasured jackets came from Tommy Ivo. "I bought two Lions Drag Strip jackets from him. Now, these aren't like club jackets; lots of guys still feel Lions was the world's greatest dragstrip, and there is a very steady demand for real ones." The best ones, Mike says, have a known racer's name on them.

"In the early days, Mickey Thompson had some special jackets made up to be given to anyone who topped the 150-mph barrier. Tommy missed getting that one by a couple of weeks, and then missed the next one when the 160-mph barrier was broken. So when they got up to 170 mph and another set of jackets, he ran a 169 and change one afternoon and then lamented to Thompson, 'You know, Mickey, if I don't get my butt in gear, I am not going to get one of those either.' The following week, before eliminations started on Saturday night, there was an announcement over the loudspeaker for Tommy Ivo to come to the starting line. Mickey smiles and hands him this one that reads 'Almost 170 MPH' with his name on it. That same night, Tommy went out and ran that 170, so he got a regular one as well. I got the stuff home and I already had the whole set hanging here—150, 160, 170, 180, and 190 mph. But the more I looked at them, the more I realized the only one I really needed to keep was the only one that ever said 'Almost' on it.

> As with the club jackets, Mike is attracted to the primitive art aspect of club plaque design. Four major companies cast most of the plaques back in the day for the more than 50,000 car clubs there were in the U.S.



> Mike bought this jacket from Bill Jenkins "during one of my many visits to see him. He decided to make this up in 1967 or so using his HOT ROD Top Ten jacket, and it even has some earlier patches on it. Some, like the big ones he got from Isky for class wins at Indy, have a different year stitched onto it in each upper corner. There is a '67 Car Craft All-Star patch, a '68 Super Stock Nationals patch, and the Bell helmet on the front is sewn on upside down."



> Among the plaques in Mike's personal collection, this Smokers plaque is the most valuable. "It is one of two known to exist and is the first one the Smokers club ever had," he says.



> This isn't just any stalled project. The original owner bought the fiberglass T-bucket in 1965 with the intent to build it, and just never did. So he carefully stored the body, chassis, and all sorts of parts for the project in his barn until a chance conversation at a car show brought Mike to it. He is now the caretaker and thinks it's way cool as it is.





> This was a store display for a hobby shop. “To get one, the store needed to buy a certain quantity of that model,” Mike says. “The guys who collect models and model displays are the most serious buyers. Today, some of these have even been reproduced. The originals are very scarce.”

Size Matters

“Clothing is probably the most expensive thing that I handle right now,” says Mike. “The size actually matters because a lot of guys want to have a real jacket they can wear at a special event. I get lots of requests for XL and even larger, but they do not show up often. The guy who wore an XL back then was on the football team; he probably wasn’t in a car club. Many collectors just want wool jackets, but I personally like the earlier satin and cloth ones.”

According to Mike, clothing often breaks into two categories: rarity versus condition and functionality. “I do not think the condition affects the value. I like the idea the clothing was used and worked in, and visually the club jackets are a lot more subjective than, say, a track jacket might be. The artwork matters.”

Not all of Mike’s customers are men. “I do have female customers for clothing. I have wives of male customers who will buy something for themselves that might have belonged to a racer’s wife. Now for the truly famous women, icons like Linda Vaughn, Jungle Pam Hardy, and Shirley Muldowney, that is a pretty wide-open marketplace. I recently helped Pam sell a number of the pieces she wore back when she and Jungle toured, and they all sold very quickly.”

Club Plaques

For Mike, his attraction to car club plaques is their art, what he calls “the primitive nature of the design. Most people do not realize there were 50,000 car clubs in the United States in the 1950s and ’60s, and there were four major companies that cast them, although I have owned more than a few that were cast at a local foundry or in shop class. Also there are some early hand-painted tin club plaques that are in their own category. Very rare.”

If you’ve paid attention to club plaques, you may have noticed some of the artwork appears on more than one club’s plaque. That’s because some of the names and art on the club plaques were generic, says Mike. “The club I was in as a kid was the Outlaws, and we ordered the plaques from the Speed Gems catalog because we couldn’t afford the specially designed variety. Generally, guys who collect these plaques like them all, but for many people there is a bigger focus on the California clubs since that was the birthplace of hot rodding itself.”

The Un-Built Hot Rod

“That has a great story,” says Mike, pointing at an unfinished T-bucket in his collection. “In the 1960s, companies like Kellison were building these T-buckets in fiberglass, especially after *77 Sunset Strip* came out on TV. Twelve years ago, at the York show, a guy asked me about selling his racing newspapers. One box had speed catalogs in them, and one was a catalog from U.S. Speed Sport, which also sold fiberglass T-buckets. I told him I had one still in the envelope that was addressed to me, that I had ordered as a kid. He said, ‘I went a step further. I bought a car back then but never built it. I still have it. I’m retiring next year and I’m going to finally build it.’”

For the next 10 years, Mike checked with him every six months or so, just to see how the car was coming along. “Then, two years

TWO-WHEEL ELIMINATOR ★

“This is a Murray Eliminator,” explains Mike. “It was introduced at the New York Auto Show in 1969, and they printed three of these display posters with permission from HOT ROD magazine.”

At a car show in Atlantic City Mike was approached by a collector with some hot rod stuff. He collected bikes, and Mike said he “flipped out” when he saw the poster. The guy told Mike the poster wasn’t for sale, “but he had a still-sealed 1960s drag slot car set that he wanted \$1,000 for, which, at that time, was insane. I said OK, but he must not have heard me, because he then says, ‘Would you buy that set for a grand if I sell you the poster?’ I’d take \$300 for the poster.” He had the pricing all backward, and I happily agreed.”

Later, Mike got to thinking about what he had said about there being three of those posters, “so I started tracking down vintage bicycle dealers and ended up with all of them. I sold two and kept one for my collection.

“I still have the slot car set. It still hasn’t caught up to the price he thinks he got for it.”

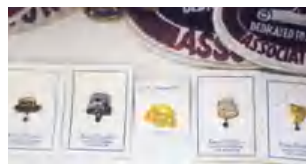
And the bike? “Marlin Huss, who owns the Jungle Jim Vega wagon Pro Stocker, was here one day and said, ‘Murray? I think the pit bike I ride around on is a Murray.’ I did not have a bike to go with the poster yet. When I asked him if he wanted to sell it, he says, ‘What will I do for a pit bike?’ I said, ‘How about if I find a cool one for you and we can trade?’ He agreed, I got him another neat old bike, and we swapped.”



> This shirt is from the 1955 Nationals held at Great Bend, Kansas. “There was one that officials wore, and there was one that was hand-embroidered for the club that helped them put on the race, the Sunflower Rod & Custom Association,” explains Mike. “This shirt came up on eBay and only showed the back. I was interested in it simply due to the artwork. When it arrived and I saw the embroidered NHRA logo on the front, I realized that I had a shirt worn by members at the first Nationals. In 1956, NHRA moved the Nationals to Kansas City, and the club switched its affiliation to the AHRA, so that early logo embroidered on the front dated it to 1955.”



> “The desirability and value of a poster is generally a function of the graphics, the exception being posters for historically important races,” says Mike. Many of the early posters did not survive, since just enough were printed to tack up on poles or put in service station windows right before the event, and then were thrown out. The few that are still around came from people who saved them after the event. “The Old Bridge and Atlantic City events are very early and super rare. Only a couple exist.”



> “Membership pins were part of the early days, and there were nine of them; they cost a buck,” Mike says. “They started in 1951. You got the number for each year you were a member.

ago, he surprised me. He asked, ‘What are you doing next Tuesday?’ I didn’t miss a beat; I replied, ‘I’m coming down to Maryland to see you!’ He told me, ‘You know, I bought the whole chassis back then. I am going to let you have that, too.’”

When Mike got to the man’s place, he spotted the T-bucket, covered in dust and sitting outside the barn where it had been stored since new. Mike admitted up front, “I will be perfectly honest with you. I deal in stuff, not cars and parts. All I know is that I want to own this. Tell me the price and I’ll pay you.”

The man asked Mike, “What would you do with it if you got it?” Mike said, “It would be a shame to build it now. I would just put in the garage and look at it. It is that cool.”

“OK then,” says the man. “I want you to have it.” When Mike pulled out his wallet, the man said, “No, I want you to have this. I’m giving it to you.”

“Look,” says Mike, “if I buy this, it’s going in my garage. But sooner or later everything gets sold, and it should not be me benefiting from that. It should be you.” But the man was firm. “I don’t want your money. Let’s get this in the truck.”


They loaded the body and chassis, and then the man opened the barn door, “and here are all the parts for the engine, the gauges, the pickup bed, all brand-new. I thought he had only bought the body and frame.”

Mike tried again to pay the man for the car. Again he refused. Finally he told Mike, “You came down here 10 years ago and gave me several thousand dollars for stuff I would have been glad to get

If your membership lapsed, you went back to the number one, so the only people who got to year nine were the ones who had joined that first year and never quit. Ironically, it took me nine years to assemble the whole set. Most of these came from NHRA division directors.”

\$100 for. You called me a couple of times a year to see how I was doing, how my kids were, and you never bugged me to sell this, just asked if I had gotten to work on it yet. I don’t know anyone who cares more about this stuff than you do, and there is no place else it belongs except with you.”

At that point, Mike realized “continuing to insist on paying him would only diminish the gesture he was obviously intent on making, so I gave up.” Later, when Mike compared the dates of his purchases on the receipts, between May and August of 1965, to the postmark on his catalog, June 1965, he realized that “when I was sending away for my dream car, he was buying his, and I ended up with it almost 50 years later. I told my kids that if anything happens to me, whatever they get for it they must give to charity. It is amazing that it survived, and I’m grateful to be its caretaker.”

Among the events he visits each year Mike makes an annual trek to the California Hot Rod Reunion, and he can be contacted through his website goyda.com. He values word-of-mouth referrals as the best references to his integrity, and he has made his lifelong passion of hot rodding into a career that has benefited other collectors worldwide. 

MATCH BASH ★

“This is a very important trophy,” Mike says with a grin. It was given to Dave Strickler for winning the 1965 NHRA Springnationals Match Bash class, “which was technically the very first funny car eliminator ever held. A local man called and asked if I would be interested in it. I called Susie Strickler to verify it was not stolen, as she still has much of Dave’s memorabilia.” It turned out that in the early 1970s, Strickler had worked with the Boy Scouts, who raffled off this trophy as a fundraiser. The seller was the person who bought it back then.

“When I bought it, it was missing the Match Bash plate,” Mike says. “I told the gentleman, ‘If you ever find it, please call me. I’ll pay well for it.’ About a year later they were getting ready to throw out a bunch of magazines in a rack near the mantle they had kept the trophy on, and the plate fell out of one of the magazines.”

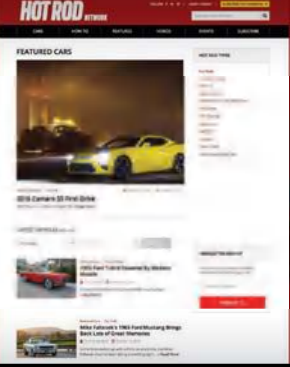
The jacket came from a local antique dealer who asked Mike if he needed a York US 30 jacket. “To be honest, I hesitated since most of them are simply class winner jackets and not particularly desirable, as they turn up fairly frequently. Then he said it stated ‘Season Champion’ on it and was black cloth, and he told me he

had found out a local guy named Dave Strickler had owned it. It had turned up at a local auction. The ‘Strick A/FX’ lettering was icing on the cake. It is probably from the Chevy Z11 era.”



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Traditional Power

Phil Weiand's name has been synonymous with high performance ever since he started casting flathead intake manifolds in the days before World War II. You can still buy Weiand speed parts thanks to Holley, which now owns the brand, and Summit Racing, which offers this very traditional Weiand 6-71 supercharger for big- and small-block Chevys and 392-inch Hemis. The blower case is available in satin (seen here) or polished finishes. Inside are double-pinned rotors that were clearanced and timed after the supercharger's assembly, and heavy-duty front and rear bearing plates. Summit offers a Weiand street supercharger kit that packages the blower with a one-piece aluminum nose drive assembly, upper and lower drive pulleys, an idler pulley and bracket, a dual V-belt accessory drive pulley, a 3-inch drivebelt, and an intake manifold with an adapter to mount two four-barrel carburetors.

Contact:

Summit Racing; 800/230-3030;
summitracing.com



Nightmare Solved

Beydler CNC calls its Manibolt Driller "the best-possible solution to a worst-case nightmare." That nightmare: frozen manifold bolts that break off flush with the cylinder head when you're trying to get exhaust manifolds or headers off an old engine. With nothing to grab onto, you're forced to drill out the old bolt. That task is made a whole lot easier, and more precise, with the Manibolt Driller. The Driller template attaches to the head and positions a guide for your drill exactly where you need it. The tool template is CNC machined from 6061 T6 aluminum; and versions are made for big- and small-block Chevy (which Erin is holding), big- and small-block Ford, and 5.7L Hemi.

Contact:

Beydler CNC; 541/258-5191;
maniboltdriller.com



Rivet It

Doing some body panel fab work on your hot rod? You can join panels like a pro with Eastwood's Solid Rivet Kit. Inside the box is everything you need to drive AN470 aluminum round-head rivets in $\frac{1}{8}$ - and $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch diameters, including the pneumatic rivet gun, a cast steel universal bucking bar, a Cleco kit (for holding panels together before riveting or welding), and a quarter-pound of rivets in each diameter. The gun requires 2.8 cfm of air at 90 psi and has a variable-speed trigger to help when driving the smaller rivets.

Contact:

Eastwood; 800/343-9353;
eastwood.com



• TECH & PICS: BRAD OCOCK

Time Warp

★ Putting the “Freakin’ Excellent” in FE



Welcome to the second installment of our stroker FE engine buildup for our altered project. If you were with us last time you’ll recall we’re working with Barry Rabotnick at Survival Motorsports, one of

the nation’s authorities on FE engines. Our goal: We want to build an anvil. Nothing exotic, high-strung, or fragile. We don’t want an 800hp monster spinning at 7,500 rpm. We want to race, not constantly work on the engine.

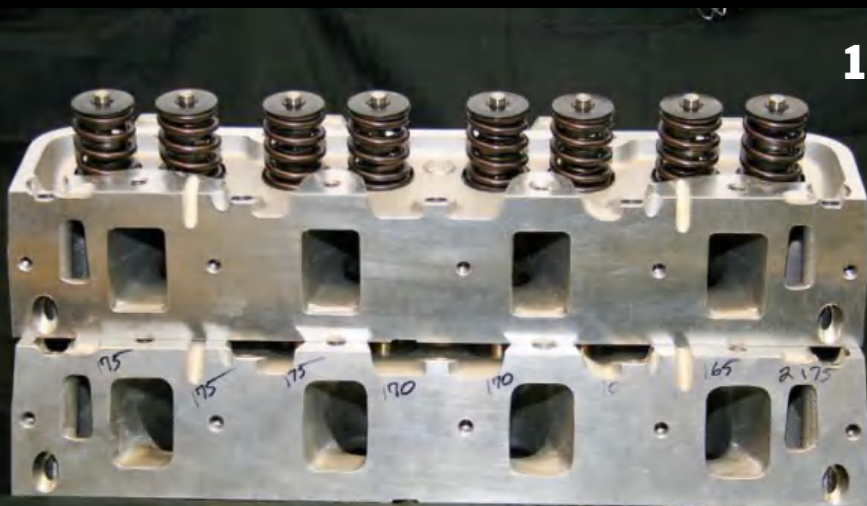
The foundation is a swap-meet 390 “mirror 105” block filled with a Scat crank and rods and Mahle forged pistons. To that we are adding a Lunati hydraulic roller cam, Harland Sharp roller rockers, Edelbrock heads, and a factory low-riser 2x4 intake.

For a street engine, it’s respectable. For a race engine, we left a lot on the table. The medium-riser Edelbrock heads are right out of the box, while the low-riser intake gives us port misalignment that hurts to look at. Barry said the low-riser intake on medium-riser heads usually costs about 20 hp, while a basic gasket

match, bowl work, and larger valves in the Edelbrock heads—“nothing crazy, just the basics”—are good for a solid 20-30 hp. Port them to within an inch of their lives and there’s even more available.

The cost of the cam, lifters, and rocker arms looks like high-end stuff, but think of it this way: The cost difference between a flat-tappet and a roller cam is several hundred dollars. The performance advantage of a roller is pretty hefty, and with the new motor oils, flat-tappet cams are not as reliable as they once were. That may be a stretch for the justification, but so be it. Keeping costs low in other areas lets you splurge on the hydraulic roller cam, and even at that, it’s not a bank-breaker.

As for the rockers, Barry has some strong opinions on the worth of factory rocker arms, none of them flattering.



> The Edelbrock heads are the medium-riser versions, assembled with valves and springs for a hydraulic roller cam. The stock ports are seen on top, while Survival's ported versions are below. For our 500-550hp target, we didn't even gasket-match them.

> The exhaust ports on the heads have the "Cobra Jet" four-bolt exhaust flanges, copied from the original FoMoCo castings. Again, unported on top, ported on bottom.



> The Edelbrock heads have 72cc combustion chambers and large 2.09/1.66-inch valves. Stock heads used 2.04/1.57 valves and larger combustion chambers for the common heads, while 406 Tri-power heads and low-riser 427 heads had tight 56cc chambers and the larger valves. Those are good heads, but they obviously put the compression way up. Factory 428 Cobra Jet heads are excellent street heads but are getting scarce and spendy.



> One thing to look out for with factory heads is busted exhaust manifold ears. We've seen several that are broken, and on the desirable factory castings we've seen several with shoddy repairs.



> The Edelbrock heads eliminated the worry of broken manifold bosses by making the flange beefier, made it a blind hole, and added a reinforcement rib.

There's also some concern with stock rocker shaft stands failing with high-lift cams. Lots of guys do just fine with stock pieces, but we don't want to chance it. If we're going to spend a couple hundred bucks on factory adjustables, we'd rather spend a bit more on quality aftermarket pieces. For hot street engines and race engines, Barry recommended Harland Sharp.

When all was said and done, our 445ci FE squeaked out 505 hp at 5,500 rpm. Our target was 500-550 hp, with a 5,500-rpm redline, so we were fairly pleased with it. The reality is 500 hp in the lightweight altered is going to be plenty fast for us. While online calculators are really only an educated guess, they give a terrific starting point for a build. By plugging in some weights we've found online for different components (aluminum-head FE, Powerglide, and so on), and some rough guesstimates for what's built so far (body weighs less than 50 pounds, chassis probably weighs 250, and so on), we figure the car is going to weigh about 1,800 pounds with me in it. The calculators over at Wallaceracing.com say that with a 30-inch tall tire and 3.30 gears, that combination should work out to 8.90s at 151 mph, turning 5,550 rpm through the traps.

To be honest, that's too fast. If our guess on the car's weight is off, running the calculations at 2,000 pounds with everything

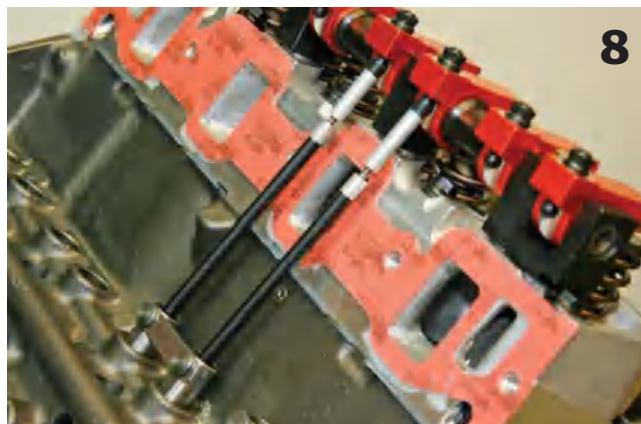
6



> The Lunati valvetrain: hydraulic roller lifters, a double-roller adjustable timing chain set, and a cam with 0.637 lift, 241 intake at 0.050, 249 exhaust at 0.050, on a 110-degree separation angle. When we commented that's the kind of cam that'll put hair on your chest, Barry said "Meh. We're FE guys. We put 0.600-inch cams in our street engines. These aren't girly small-block Chevys." Alrighty then.



> The Harland Sharp roller rocker kit comes complete with shafts and billet stands that reinforce a factory weakness with performance engines.



> The last thing you order are the pushrods. A pair of adjustable rods gives us the measurement. Once everything is mocked up, the final, correct length of the pushrods can be determined and ordered.



> Factory adjustable rockers are neat, for nostalgia's sake, but they have a lot of shortcomings. First is the lack of support for the end of the shaft. A common fix is the billet aluminum piece shown here. More troublesome are the adjusters themselves. Originally an interference-fit, they loosen up over time and then won't hold a set, and there is no jam nut. To install a jam nut, the area must be milled flat, or the nut will cock on the threads, load the part and it'll break off the back of the rocker arm. Of course, facing the area for the nut also removes material, weakening it. If you've got the equipment to do it yourself, and it's a mild street engine, they're okay, but otherwise, go with the good stuff.

else the same puts us through the quarter at 9.25 at 145 mph.

We'll be doing a lot of 1/8-mile racing with it too (probably more 1/8 than 1/4), and the calculator says it'll run about 115 mph with 4.11 gears at 2,000 pounds. Gear selection is another area where the calculators come in handy. Most people automatically think higher gears in the quarter-mile for a drag car, not 3.30s. Bench racing with the guys, a lot of them thought 4.11 or 4.30 for the quarter, and 4.56 or 5.13 for the 1/8, "because that's what everybody ran back then." We'll set up a pair of spool-filled pumpkins for the Mopar 8 3/4 and everything should be pretty happy.

But even within our basic parameters, there's still room for improvement. We're already on the waiting list for a Tunnel Wedge single-plane 2x4 medium-riser intake when the next batch is available. At that point we'd also mill the choke horns off the carbs and top them with Stub Stacks. We're pretty confident that a relatively easy 50-75 hp could be had if we decide to go for it. We built a fair amount of compression into the engine, and the



10

> We used ARP head studs and 12-point fasteners to secure the Edelbrock heads (and yes, we painted the pretty aluminum heads black, a must for this nostalgia build). We also used 12-point ARP stainless fasteners for the intake.



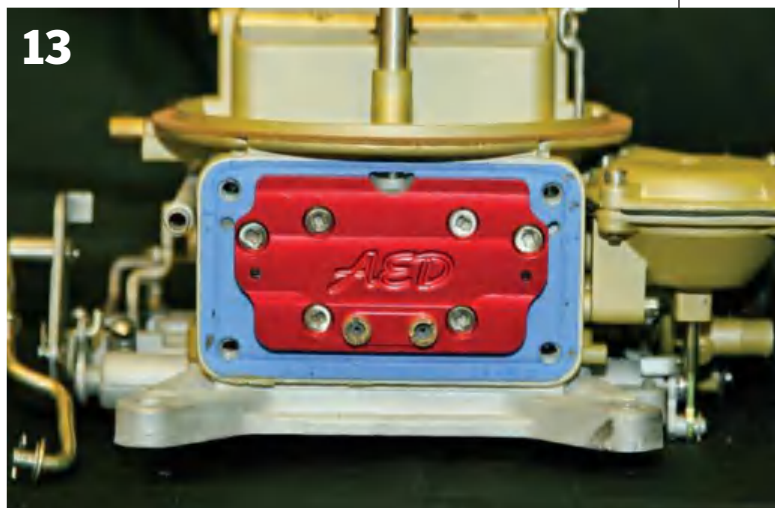
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> This was the find of the whole build: We scored a complete low-riser intake with linkage, air cleaner, and carbs off eBay, all ready to go. Deals can still be had.



12

> There are two styles of factory low-riser intakes: one with the "dog-bone" mounting pad as shown, and the other with a hollowed-out mounting pad that just has the perimeter and the throats raised up to meet the carb. We don't know of any performance difference between the two.



13

> When we bought the intake, the carbs had already been rebuilt and included these jet blocks in place of the factory metering plates. This is a really nice addition and will ease tuning.



14

> Here's the difference between a low-riser and medium-riser port. This is the intake port on the head, the gasket represents the intake runner on a low-riser intake. On the low-riser, the runner's floor is lower. Ford raised the floor on the medium-riser, which increased the height of the intake as well. When you bolt a low-riser intake to a medium-riser head, there is a misalignment in the port's floor. It's a little under a quarter inch, and while it does hurt flow, Barry says it's only about a 20hp loss. You don't want to port the bottom of the head port to fix this; and while you could TIG the intake and do all kinds of grinding, it's not worth it for 20 hp in our estimation. If we really decide we need the power later, we'll find a medium-riser intake, though the original No. 78 had a low-riser.



15

> The early engines used a road-draft tube and vented oil fill cap, while later engines used valve cover breathers. If you're not using vented valve covers, you'll need an "in" and "out" for crankcase ventilation. The "in" is the oil fill cap, while this aftermarket breather bolts on in place of the original road-draft tube. It requires a basket filled with stainless steel wool under it. Holman-Moody and others made these in the '60s, and aftermarket ones are available today. This is a 427 on Survival's dyno.

16



> Timing covers are early and late. The early one on the right has two threaded holes in the face for the timing pointer, while the later one uses an extended bolt boss. The originals were die-cast, while later aftermarket replacement covers are sand-cast, are thicker and heavier.

17



> We ordered a Power Bond harmonic damper for our build. This one is shown on the front of another customer's high-riser 427 race engine.

18



> An MSD Pro Billet distributor was ordered and dropped in. Vacuum-advance models are taller and won't clear a factory 2x4 air cleaner assembly.

20



> Cut-to-fit MSD wires will be the last thing we install on the engine.

DYNO CHART

RPM	TORQUE	HP
3,000	462	266
3,100	467	276
3,200	469	287
3,300	472	297
3,400	477	310
3,500	478	319
3,600	480	329
3,700	484	342
3,800	492	356
3,900	502	374
4,000	509	388
4,100	512	401
4,200	513	411
4,300	514	421
4,400	515	432
4,500	517	443
4,600	518	453
4,700	517	462
4,800	515	471
4,900	512	478
5,000	509	485
5,100	504	490
5,200	499	494
5,300	492	497
5,400	488	502
5,500	482	505
5,600	469	501
5,700	459	498

cam specs are stout, so we won't run out of short-block. With an improved top end, the combo would still be as durable as an anvil because we won't change the redline.

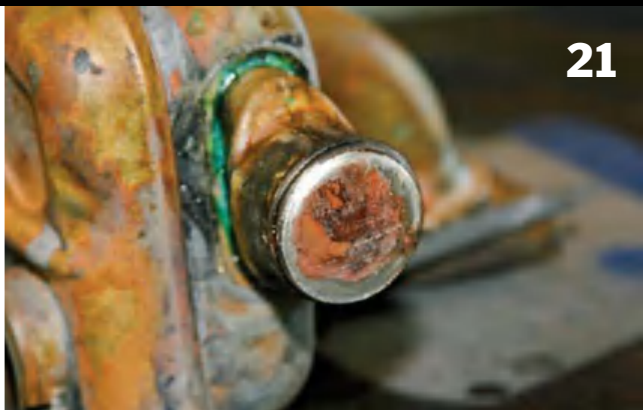
It's there if we want it, but the fact is, I don't think we do. With 500 reliable, pump-gas horsepower, a self-imposed valvetrain-friendly 5,500-rpm rev limit, a Powerglide, and a spool in the rear, we'll see high 9s or low 10s, and that should be more than adequate for years to come.

And like Uncle George's original car, we don't foresee needing to do much more than check the plugs and change the oil. Reliable, fun times hanging out with friends at the track. Now that's traditional!

19



> The tall cap on the MSD just cleared the factory oval air cleaner, but there isn't enough room to put the wires on. We'll solve this by installing a pair of half-inch carb spacers. We like carb spacers anyway, because they get the throttle blades out of the plenum and increase power across the whole power band.



21

> I picked up an original expansion tank in a junkyard a couple years ago. The No. 78 ran one, but it was capped; the block was filled with water, but there was no radiator. I soldered a freeze plug into the radiator hose hole to plug it, painted it black as per original, and then stripped it after the photo shoot and took it to someone who actually knows how to solder and fixed my leaks.



22

> I picked up the round-top Ford valve covers off a '58 T-bird in a Denver junkyard a few years ago on the way to Bonneville. The notched-end Ford valve covers came from a Georgia junkyard since then. The original No. 78 had factory stamped valve covers for the first two years, and tall, cast pent-roof valve covers by 1965. We don't know if the OE versions said "Ford" or "Thunderbird," as a lot of 406 and early 427s did. Whichever were the "correct" ones had the notched ends, but it's pretty tight with the Harland Sharp rocker gear, so we're going to run the earlier covers from Denver.



23

CAM BEARING ALIGNMENT ★




In another life, Barry Rabotnick was a bearing guy at Federal Mogul. This gave him a little insight into the ways of Ford's cam bearings, and he's surmised Ford did it differently than the others, at least for the FEs.

The original Ford cam bearings were open at the ends and interlocked like puzzle pieces. The bearings were loaded onto a bar and all installed at the same time in the blocks. Then a second bar came through and clearance-bored all the bearings, essentially align-honing them. Then the cam was slid home.

The problem for builders today is that the bearings were align-honed with great precision, but not the bearing bores themselves, so the actual hole through the bearing might be offset a bit. When we install new bearings today, the holes the cam rides on might not be aligned perfectly.

Barry's head machinist, Bill Blair, made this tool to align-hone the new bearings to the block. Basically, any shiny spots on the cam-bearing surface are scraped with the cutter, to duplicate what Ford originally did. We're talking thousandths of an inch here.

> These are pretty cool: mid '60s factory Mercury pent-roof valve covers that are tall like the Cobra Jet models and clear high-lift cams. With "Mercury" in script and a lightning bolt below, these vented covers are fairly sought after. We found these in a Georgia junkyard last summer, on a 390 under the hood of a big Merc. We've heard these were a two-year only design, but can't confirm that. 

★

SOURCES

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Survival Motorsports; 248/366-3309; survivalmotorsports.com



• TECH & PICS: ZACH DAVIDSON

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Period Perfect

★ ————— The Right Rearend for your Gasser

Interest in vintage drag racing is now approaching a rapid boil. Cars from all the traditional drag racing classes are being built and/or restored, but among the most popular of these period-correct builds are the cars riding high on solid front axles and sporting fenderwell headers: gassers. Building a gasser is a satisfying way to blast down the track, turn some heads, and salute the good old days of racing. Additionally, it can be a relatively affordable way to enjoy a day at the track. A period gasser can be built by scrounging swap meets, salvage yards, and the Internet for many of the components necessary to complete a genuine example of one of the dominant race cars from the 1950s, '60s and '70s.

Building an example that truly reflects what was around back then takes a certain passion for correctness. It's not to the same level as a concours-correct restoration; no judge will deduct points for an incorrect

paint code. But the components should at least be grounded in the era.

Several features are common to most gassers. A solid front axle was found under the front of nearly every gasser. This reduced weight and eliminated the stock suspension, producing a spacious engine bay that eagerly accepted the chosen powerplant. Underneath the back end of an overwhelming majority of gassers was a 1957-'64 Pontiac/Oldsmobile 9.3-inch differential. And yet, all too often, a beautiful gasser built today is sitting on top of a Ford 9-inch axle. They're tough, right? Why not a Ford?

A little history: In 1957, three important axles were introduced: Ford's 9-inch, Chrysler's 8.75-inch, and GM's 9.3-inch Hotchkiss-style axle for Pontiac and Oldsmobile. For many years prior, Olds and Pontiac differentials had been a dominant rear axle in drag racing and other

motorsports. The two makes used very similar differentials through the mid-'40s and into the '50s. They were robust, drop-out-style third members that offered the strength and serviceability racers required. Mickey Thompson even produced aftermarket Olds and Pontiac magnesium gear cases that were frequently used in dragsters.

In 1957, the Pontiac and Oldsmobile designs were combined and improved upon, producing a brand new 9.3-inch differential. Compared side-by-side with the Chrysler, it boasted stronger gears and larger bearings. The 8.75-inch had slightly larger, 30-spline axleshafts compared to the P/O's 29-spline shafts; but by 1959, big 31-spline factory shafts were standard, and aftermarket shafts for the 9.3-inch eliminated any supposed shortcomings.

The now famous Ford 9-inch, with its unique, straddle mounted pinion, offered



> A lot of thought went into the Trophy Track's design. A strengthened ring-gear flange minimizes gear deflection under load. Large, heavy bearing hubs exploit upsized carrier bearings. Thick carrier walls support cross shafts and help eliminate stress cracking. The Trophy Track is much stronger and likely more affordable than any decent OE unit, and it comes with a warranty.

> Much of the available real estate inside the 9.3-inch case is occupied by the Trophy Track. Durability and strength were the principal objectives throughout its design. There's plenty of bulk in all the right areas, allowing the Trophy Track to tolerate more abuse than any OE limited-slip ever could.

> At the heart of the Trophy Track are four spider gears on two intersecting cross-shafts. Cross-shaft diameter is greater than that of either OE offering. The gears utilize advanced tooth profiles and are constructed of impact resistant AISI 9310 steel, the same material used in drag race-dedicated "pro" ring-and-pinion gears.

great strength for its weight, but even the heavy-duty nodular-iron version suffered from weaknesses that the 9.3-inch did not. Its role in drag racing was limited to primarily Stock, Super Stock, and Factory Experimental Fords.

The new P/O 9.3-inch immediately found its way into hot rods and race cars. Aftermarket support followed in the form of beefy axles, gears, spools, couplers, and Mickey Thompson's aluminum and magnesium centersections. The new 9.3-inch provided outstanding durability when subjected to abuse from all classes of race cars, including Top Fuel.

So why did the Ford 9-inch become the premier differential of modern day hot rodding? GM quit making the 9.3-inch in 1964. Chrysler sent out the last of its 8.75-inch rearends in the early '70s. Ford continued cranking out the 9-inch in vast quantities well into the '80s. Because OE



components were still widely used in racing circles, the 9-inch gained traction as a viable alternative, superior to the newer, cheapened, integral-style axles using C-clips and flimsy internals.

For die-hard purists, it soon became a difficult proposition to build a worthy P/O 9.3-inch as aftermarket support subsided and the supply of virgin factory parts withered. For some time, only a small handful



> The spider gear (bottom) is Fabcraft's replacement gear for the early factory Safe-T-Track/Anti-Spin differential. The new Trophy Track spider gear (top) sets a new standard. Size matters here.

of ratios were available in new gears. All but a few of the old factory limited-slips had been gathered up and beaten to death. As a result, many tribute cars and gasser-inspired builds had to stray from correctness.

However, the 9.3-inch differential was saved from obsolescence by a Texas-based company called Fabcraft Metalworks and its owner, Brad Duerst. Beginning with a



> For dedicated racers dishing out big horsepower on slicks, a billet-steel carrier cap is available to ensure internals stay put during launch. These caps require custom fitting, but drive the reliability of the Pontiac/Olds 9.3-inch to the extreme.

new line of U.S.-made gearsets in desirable ratios, Fabcraft rekindled the flickering flame of the 9.3-inch. By designing ring-and-pinion sets to fit the previously less-attractive, but more available, Series II OE carriers, performance ratios could now be utilized without the need for an unfavorable ring-gear spacer. Fabcraft also offered complete components for the differential, including all necessary bearings, seals, shims, limited-slip clutches, solid spacers, and crush sleeves, as well as beautifully refurbished OE parts.


Several years later, the popularity of this almost deceased differential was rapidly swelling. Brand new gears in ratios from 3.42 through 5.38 could be purchased and mounted on a new forged-steel spool with 31- or 35-spline axles. Billet-steel yokes and carrier caps could be added to make the 9.3-inch nearly bomb-proof.

The renewed interest in the P/O 9.3-inch generated high demand for any limited-slip units that were left. With perhaps less than 10 percent of Pontiac and Oldsmobile fullsize cars possessing the Safe-T-Track and Anti-Spin options, prices for unmolested examples remained high. And even though new internals were available from Fabcraft, the carriers were simply becoming too difficult to find. Demand exceeded supply, so after several years of planning, designing, and prototyping, Fabcraft Metalworks teamed up with a major U.S. manufacturer to produce a brand new, extreme-duty limited-slip differential for the 9.3-inch called the Trophy Track.

While not as strong as a race-dedicated spool, the 31-spline Trophy Track carries a potent arsenal, including six 9310 alloy gears and twin cross-shafts, all of which are dimensionally larger and stronger than anything offered previously. The Trophy Track's strengthened bearing hubs even use larger-than-stock bearings, the same ones found on spools.

While it still may take an investment in time to locate a good third-member core and housing for your gasser project, these components are still relatively plentiful and quite affordable. All housings have strong, tapered axle tubes, come in numerous widths, and sport a variety of suspension brackets. They are also easily modified to suit any chassis. Good third-member cores are also relatively easy to come by, as many are now being saved from recyclers by fellow enthusiasts. There are three different third-member castings, but all will install into any '57-'64 Pontiac/Olds housing.

For the do-it-yourselfer, Fabcraft offers a full-color manual with excellent tech info on the differential. It'll help you sniff out the right parts and will walk you through building the differential for your gasser project.

So what we are left with is this: A fully capable, period-correct, brute of a differential with complete aftermarket support. There's absolutely no excuse to use the wrong differential in your gasser. Stop listening to your street rodder buddy and back away from the 9-inch. You're building a gasser. The Pontiac/Oldsmobile 9.3-inch is your axle. 



> If your car rides on wrinkle-walls year-round, you probably should be using a spool. There are 31- and 35-spline variants offered. A spool is lightweight, tremendously strong, and offers unfailing traction when you need to put daylight under the front tires.

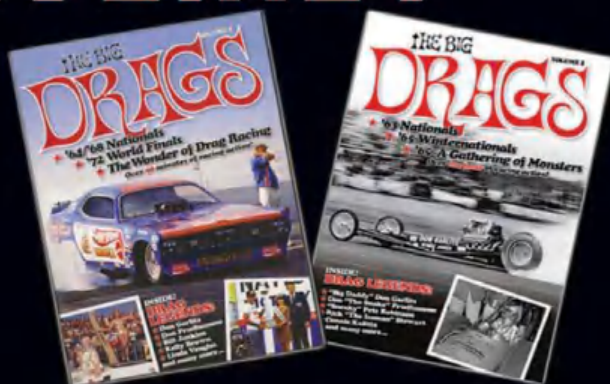


> This third member is built for battle and represents the pinnacle of strength for the big Pontiac/Olds differential. A 35-spline spool, billet-steel driver's side carrier cap, billet-steel 1350 yoke, and premium fasteners provide the fortitude necessary to run deep into single-digit territory at the track.

SOURCE

Fabcraft Metalworks; 800/208-8242; fabcraftmetalworks.com

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Lost and Found

In the September '15 HRD, page 52 ("The Golden Age of Drag Racing"), author Dave Wallace included two photos of a homebuilt dragster and four-cylinder powerplant that appeared in *Car Craft* in 1968. At the end of the caption, Dave wondered whether the car survived, and asked about its whereabouts. I'm happy to report that the Byron Barnes dragster is alive and well in Springfield, Oregon. Byron's children and grandchildren made me the lucky caretaker in 2013. I've since restored the car and engine, which is again cackling on nitromethane. I would love to share this dragster and its story with your readers.

Tim Riel

We'd love to see it firsthand, Tim! Dave Wallace will be visiting soon to photograph the unique slingshot for a full feature.

—Drew Hardin





The Quiet One

I took these pictures while working at Vargo Dragway in Perkaspie, Pennsylvania, in 1967. This was the only time I saw this car race there, so I don't know if this was its one and only race. The car had mufflers and just stood up and went. As you can see, the day did not end on a positive note. I don't think the driver was seriously injured. I think Bob's Speed Shop was located somewhere in New Jersey. I would love to find out more details about the car if anyone remembers it.

Richard DeMott



Trophy Guy

Great picture of Spokane's Dick Flynn at the Deer Park dragstrip (Trophy Girl, Sept. '15). Fortunately Dick is still with us. Stopped by his shop today to find him working on a customer's V-8/60. Sadly, Dick's wife JoAnne passed away in 2012. At 83 Dick keeps quite busy building hot rod engines of all varieties for us in the Spokane region. He doesn't have any idea who the model is in the picture. He was pleased you got the mph/win right. That Deuce three-window was his daily driver at that time.

There are more vintage pictures of Dick and other Spokane legends in John Gunsaulis's excellent book *Spokane Hot Rodding, Images of America*.

Mike McQuesten



Stach & Wareham

After seeing the article about the drags in 1967 ("The Golden Age of Drag Racing," Sept. '15), I found a couple of pictures of the Thames (Anglia) panel truck my friend Gary Stach and I raced in B and C/Gas in the late 1960s. We found the body in a local junkyard and purchased it less the engine and transmission for \$10. The engine was a 301 Chevy with Hilborn fuel injection, Crane heads and roller cam backed up with a Corvette four-speed and Olds rearend. Ran consistently in the 11s at 125 mph. The race picture is from Sunshine Drag Strip in 1968 against Jim Nelson in the Nelson Brothers Corvette. Sold the car in 1971 and would love to know what became of it.

Joe Wareham



Grasshopper's Origin Story

I was delighted to see a brief article and photo about the iconic Grasshopper, a.k.a. Green Hornet, re-creation (Roddin' @ Random, July '15). I am writing to provide some additional information that you probably did not have about this re-creation when you wrote that article.

Re-creating the Grasshopper was entirely my idea. I was inspired to build a tribute to this iconic car based on the incredible job that Troy Ladd and his crew at Hollywood Hot Rods did in creating the Black Widow, a hot rod that had only existed previously as a Monogram model before my friend, Michael Feinstein, was inspired to have it built as a real car by Troy and the team at HHR.

As to the Grasshopper specifically, I have always remembered that beautiful green T-bucket from the October 1959 cover of HOT ROD and, of course, built the Monogram model of it several times before I could drive. Since we hot rodders celebrate our past and respect our traditions (exactly the theme of HRD), I wanted to see this iconic car live again.

My intention was to build a tribute car, rather than attempt to create an exact duplicate of the original. When the chassis and rollcage were complete and we had a proper Oldsmobile engine mounted, I turned my attention to another project and decided to sell the Grasshopper. I knew exactly the right guys to offer it to, my friends Beau Boeckmann and his guy, Dave Shuten. I knew that Dave would do a superb job completing the project for Beau. They changed direction a bit, using the base car we built to re-create the Grasshopper as authentically as possible, even manufacturing certain parts that were made of unobtainium for complete authenticity. As I expected, it is superb.

I think it is only fair that I am credited for the inspiration to bring this car back to life. More important is the credit due to Troy Ladd and the HHR gang for getting the project off the ground. That said, the car, as completed by Dave, is a tremendous work of art. When I first



saw it completed at the Grand National Roadster Show, I literally had tears in my eyes. Indeed, Dave, Beau, and I embraced, as I thanked them for completing my dream the way they did. My hat is off to Troy and the gang at HHR for the work they did while it was my project, and to Dave and Beau for understanding the importance of this car and completing it as they did. I believe that the roles all of us played in completing this project should be made known.

Steve Young

Young, a hot rodder and drag racer for more than 50 years, has owned and/or built several award-winning hot rods that have been the subjects of magazine stories and covers. He serves as the General Counsel of the Petersen Automotive Museum, was a member of its Board of Directors for 13 years, and served as Chairman of the Board from 2007-'12. His current project is a '38 Ford cabriolet.—DH

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Rodding & Racing Memories

My first contact with cars was driving my dad's car in the driveway. We lived where I could practice driving until I could get my license. I fumbled my first test.

I joined a hot rod club in Guelph, Ontario, named The Diablos. My first car was a '33 Plymouth five-window coupe. It was in need of an engine and transmission, plus, plus, plus. I added a '52 Ford truck engine (flathead) and trans for I think \$22. I needed a lot of parts, but I stumbled through, and with the help from my fellow members in the club I got the car running.

Honestly, I should have stopped right there. The next car I bought was a '38 Ford business coupe that was in pretty good shape and, of course, then the game was on. I purchased an already built 301 Chev engine with pistons, cam and lifters, dual-quad intake and carbs, bolted it in the '38 and used the original '38 trans, built an exhaust system, and so on. This was a really fun ride. Once you got it in Second gear and held it there, it ran pretty good.

When I was 17 I opened a little speed shop just outside Guelph, Ontario, and had a lot of fun and learned a lot about business. Eventually I bought a red/red '63 Corvette 327 four-speed car and put a few goodies on it—shifter, gears, cam and lifters, headers—and started running it every weekend. Well, things just got carried away and a new '64 Corvette got the treatment, and this car ran right on the national record of 13.0 at 110 mph.



Also that year I was approached by a Ford dealer in Toronto, Piggot Ford, to drive their 1964 Galaxy lightweight 427 high-riser built by Holman/Moody. This was an amazing car, more horsepower than I had ever imagined. The first time out with the car we ran on the NHRA record of 12.0 seconds at 120 mph.

The picture taken in front of Don's Speed Shop shows a '54 Corvette on the left and my '64 Corvette on the right. It was a stock single-four-barrel that I put a set of Jerry Jardine headers on. It had a four-speed, 4.56 gears, one set of M&H slicks, and one pair of Casler 9-inch tires. This car ran on the national record and was street driven daily!

My next fun ride was a 1965 Falcon with a 271hp 289. I had a lot of fun with this car, and it also held the national record set at Niagara Drag Way, Niagara Falls, New York. This car was torn down and declared legal in front of the largest crowd ever seen in the U.S.

Donnie Havers



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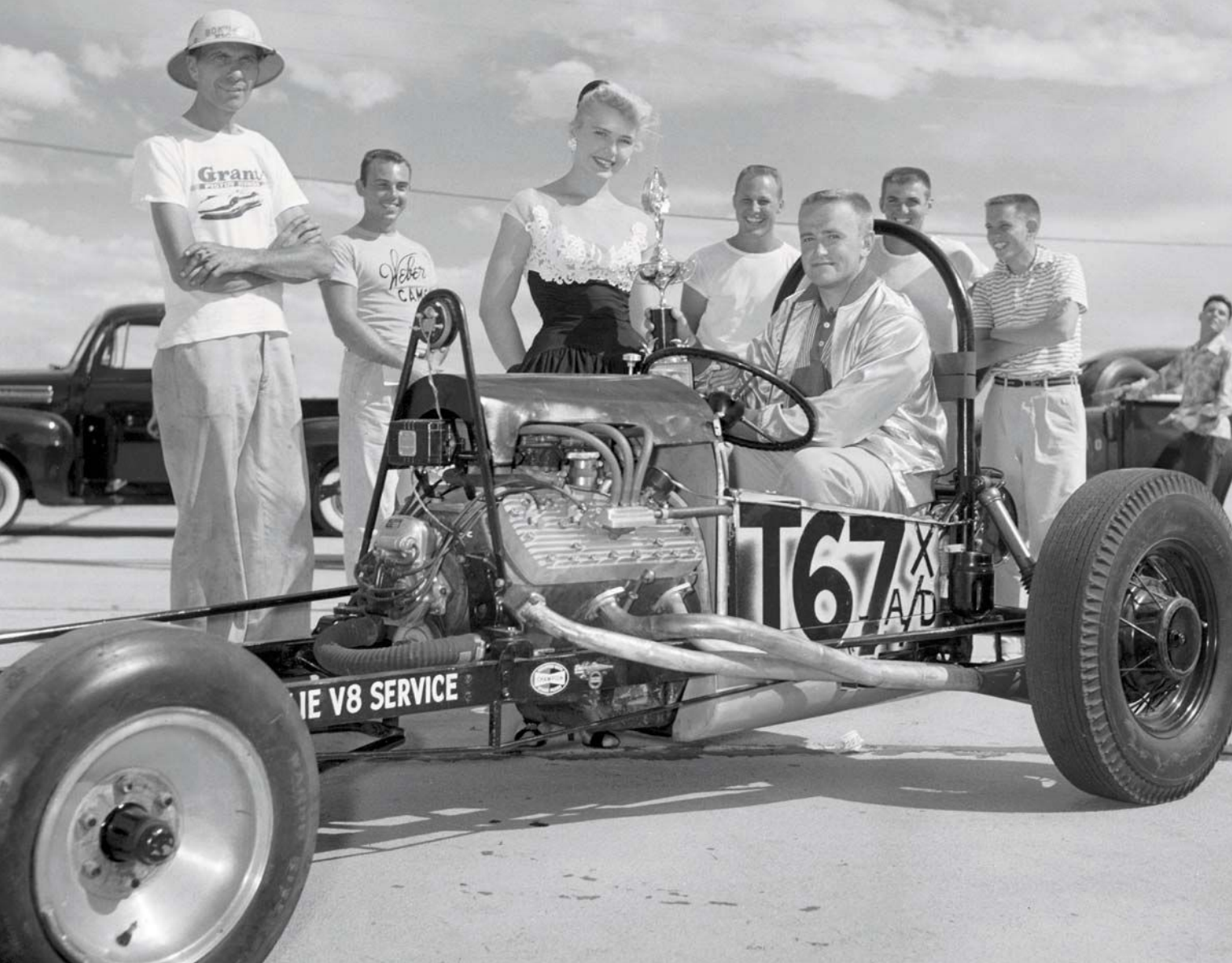
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• PIC: ERIC RICKMAN



Top Speed of the Meet

Bill Kenz and Roy Leslie are probably best known for the speed records set in their Number 777 streamliner, including the first 200-mph run (with Willie Young driving) at Bonneville in 1950.

But their need for speed wasn't limited to the Salt Flats. When the NHRA Safari came through their hometown of Denver in 1955, the team showed up at Lowry Air Force Base with two entries to run at the drags. One, a Lincoln-powered Deuce roadster, won the A

Hot Roadster class at a speed of 109.63 mph. The second, a stripped down rail job with a 296-inch Mercury flathead, ran the fastest pass of the day—122.28 mph—driven by Joe Kelly.

The dragster didn't win Top Eliminator that day, but its speed earned them some hardware and a visit with trophy queen Mary Saunders. That's Bill Kenz in the pith helmet and Kelly in the cockpit.

—DREW HARDIN

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